This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

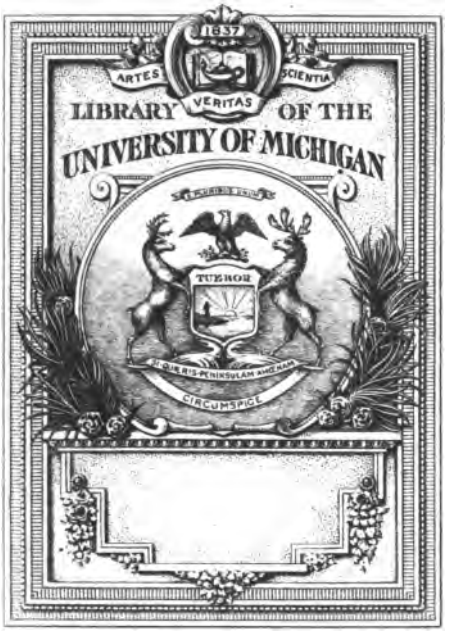
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`


1837
ARTES
VERITAS
SCIENTIA
LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
TUEBOR
SI QUIS IBI PENINSULAM AMOENAM
CIRCUMSPICE

B2X
G773ta

Grattan, Thomas Colley
1792-1864

TRAITS OF TRAVEL;

OR,

TALES OF MEN AND CITIES.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "HIGH-WAYS AND BY-WAYS."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

BOSTON:
WELLS AND LILLY,—COURT-STREET.

1829.

10-8-25 KWB

DEDICATION.

TO

SIR W. J. HORT,

OF HORTLANDS, BART.

FROM HIS OBLIGED FRIEND

AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

Librarian
Pattison
8-4-75
12197

ADVERTISEMENT.

Authors of what is intended to be (like the present volumes) light reading, are sometimes tempted to make prefatory acknowledgments that illness and other depressing circumstances have attended the progress of their work. I doubt the policy of this plan either in propitiating the critic or in interesting the public. It is very questionable whether the state of mind or body influences the pen when it is able to move at all. Many a farce has been composed in moods of hypochondria, and the deepest tragedies have often been the productions of the merriest fellows. But even admitting the contrary of my theorems, the captious reader is too fond of his privilege of *finding* faults, to receive a warning that he is to meet with them at every turn; while the most tolerant must be prejudiced against an effort to amuse, prefaced by a desponding face or a suit of mourning. The better way is, surely, to let readers be cheerful and contented while they may. On this principle, I hope mine will believe that the following pages were written in high health, high fortune, and high spirits. With a friendly few, who may find reason to imagine the contrary, I have little fear of its doing any mischief.

A portion of the sketches, and one of the tales, contained in the first and second volumes of this *mélange*, have been reprinted from periodical works; and for

another of the stories I am chiefly indebted to an original French manuscript. The anecdote entitled the Tea-pot Gentleman, was communicated to a popular actor, and introduced by him into one of his entertainments in a garbled form, but has never before appeared in print. The remainder of the matter, forming about three-fourths of the whole, has been written many months, and the book was intended to appear early in the present season. This is stated merely to obviate the reproach of carelessly hurrying another novel, of more extended design, but by no means of more pretension, than those I have hitherto written, and which I hope to offer to the public before the end of the present year.

Though not matter of much interest, the public might be amused at the various debates to which the title of a new book gives rise, and surprised to learn that the first page is most commonly the last written. In the present case, I must frankly confess, that after sundry harassing efforts to hit upon a name which might tell unpresumingly (as all title pages should) the nature of the book it ushered into the world, I have given up that part of my task, in something very like despair, leaving it entirely to my enterprising and experienced publisher, and giving him *carte blanche*, which I trust will be filled up to the public taste.

BRUSSELS, 1829.

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

	Page
A Bone to Pick; a Tale of Irish Revenge	9
The Maison de Santé	28
The Sisterhood of Charity	109
A Sœur de Charité; a Sketch from Life	115
The One-handed Flute Player of Arques in Normandy	123
The Nightmare	130
Laura Pemegia	144
The Confessions of an English Glutton	186
A Sabbath in London	203
A City Feast	212
The Pleasures of the Table	220
The Anathema	228

A BONE TO PICK;

A

TALE OF IRISH REVENGE.

All who have studied the Irish character must have remarked, among its most obvious qualities, humour and revenge. A wild mixture of these two incongruous attributes is very common. We often see the deadly passion tempered by traits of that national jocularity, which has been pronounced to be "in conversation better than wit;" but which gives a more bitter flavour to the cup of misery, filled for the object of vindictive pursuit. Numberless instances might be cited —but I shall be satisfied with recording one.

There is, in the diction of Ireland, as may be expected, and particularly in that of the remoter provinces, a coarse, but powerful, phraseology, not entirely confined to the lower orders, but garnishing the conversation of the gentry themselves, with a pungency too strong for the palate of refinement. Still it does not revolt us much in the sphere where we find it; for nothing is overpoweringly disagreeable but what is unnatural. The breadth of an Irish brogue cannot be, I should think, half so unpleasing to English ears, as the narrowness of Irish prejudice must be grating to English feeling. The man who, not ashamed of his country, honestly flounders on in all the errors of idiom and pronunciation, who declares, he "*will* be drowned, while nobody *shall* save him," is, I know, and I wish all my countrymen knew it, infinitely more honoured out

of Ireland, than the king's English clipping renegade, whose loudest and basest boast is, that he despises the land of his birth.

In the colloquial familiarities of Irish intercourse, many proverbial and idiomatic phrases are used, unknown elsewhere. Some of this conversational coin is, however, in general circulation. Every one knows, that "having a crow to pluck with you," means, having a reproach to make to you; "picking a hole in one's coat," implies finding fault, *et cetera*. Now, "giving one a bone to pick," means, by moral analogy, throwing out some hint, or stating some fact of harsh and agitating tendency, which the mind may gnaw without being nourished—a file that corrodes the teeth which bite at it. The vengeance that strikes at the heart, and is smothered in its victim's blood, is not half so deadly or so desperate as this. But I have yet a good deal to say, before I come to the illustration of my subject.

It is now several years since, by circumstances of no importance here, I was invited to dine one day with the Bar Club, in an Irish assize town, on one of the southern circuits. As barristers wish to be sometimes exclusive, they are glad to escape from the almost continual masquerade of their public life, and at their circuit dinners they admit no strangers, (except under peculiar circumstances); but, throwing off with the Toga the multitude of sins it covers, they shine forth the most sociable, most cordial, and the wittiest of all assemblies. I was very young at the time in question; and the brilliant conversation which I listened to, the flashes of merriment, the classical allusions, the anecdotes, the repartees, and the puns, altogether made an impression never to be effaced. I have seen a good deal, since that day, of celebrated scholars, writers, and wits; but, whether it is the effect of early impression, or the real fact, I think every after-display of intellectual variety, which I have witnessed since that one, has been *fade* and inferior in comparison with it.

Some time after the cloth was removed, and while the bottle was going its cheerful rounds, every bumper smacking more freshly, from the fun with which it was

flavoured, the door of the room slowly opened, and a man entered and stopped, cautiously holding the handle, neither advancing as if he had a right to come further, nor shewing any exact evidence of his confessing himself an intruder. His whole attitude spoke a mixture of confidence and doubt, the latter predominating; and he clearly paused for an invitation to advance. He gave me the impression of a guest who might have been expected without being bidden—one timidly acting under that most mortifying of privileges, *a general invitation.*

As I sat opposite the door, I could fully remark the figure and physiognomy of this new comer; and time enough was given me for observation, in consequence of the little attention he seemed to excite in those of the party, who, sitting at my side of the table, must have seen him as well as I did. The president, whose talents have long since been promoted to a seat of more dignity, was in the act of spinning out a story of excellent texture, the web of which was so cunningly woven, and so dexterously coloured, as strongly to excite the audience, and make them the more indifferent to the stranger's interruption, or *intrusion*, as I must call it. But he bore in his whole aspect evidence of a still better reason for their indifference. He was poor!—a poverty, however, that was clearly that of a gentleman. His look shewed none of the hereditary meanness which walks hand in hand with the wretchedness of the lower classes of Irish. His black coat was quite threadbare, and its fashion of some years standing; but it fitted him, and did not hang loosely on the wearer, like an ill cut but not to be mistaken badge of beggary. His other garments, worn and faded as they were, did equal credit to his tailor, for they shewed to all possible advantage all that was good in the remnant of a once muscular and manly form. The visible verge of the stranger's linen was clean, but bearing the tinge of Time's or Jealousy's jaundiced eye: the frill was puffed out into a display, which seemed less for ostentation than the convenience of covering the time-worn edges of the flowered vest; and the cravat, of the same cit-

ron hue, was tied in a profuse expenditure of "bows and ends," according to the plethoric taste of the last century, which may still be observed in the old dandies who carry their old fashions into this. The scanty remains of the stranger's hair were frizzed and dressed, and the scalp and forehead thickly larded with a paste of pomatum and powder, which covered the baldness, but could not *conceal* it, and placed the deformity of affectation upon the gracefulness of age. The hard and sun-burnt hat, held in one hand, was profusely powdered at the inside of crown and leaf, but no more able than the cranium it whilom covered to throw dust in the eyes of the observers, as to its actual "age and quality." A gold-headed cane dangled by a string from the wrist of the other ungloved hand, which displayed more than one ring of ancient workmanship, that seemed to suit the long and well formed fingers. An eyeglass shewed itself full three quarters out from between the lower buttons of the vest, and a black ribbon fastened it round the neck.

The face of this reduced gentleman told a long story, I thought, of anxiety, and pride, and suffering. The features were of the common stamp of Irish provincial gentility—intelligent, marked, and somewhat coarse: but the whole expression was softened down into an air of weather-beaten composure; not as if a sudden blow of fate had marked the countenance with woe, but as if time and care had been long chiselling it together, in lines more numerous than deep. A multitude of wrinkles covered the forehead and cheeks; the mouth was drawn downward, and a deep frown more deeply shadowed the naturally sunken eyes. I well know that after-knowledge of events often deceives us into the belief that we have traced character at first sight; but I cannot help thinking that I read in this face, on this first and last time of my beholding it, the tale of lingering and gradual disappointment, by which it had been furrowed.

As soon as the president had finished his story, and the hearty laugh which followed it had nearly subsided, he turned to the visitor, and exclaimed—

"Aha, Mr. M'Ronan, you are there!—come in, come in, welcome! We are glad to see you—come in, and sit down, and take a glass of wine."

On this invitation, unaccompanied as it was by any movement of consideration or ceremony on the part of the president or his friends, the *permitted* rather than the invited guest came in—to receive on sufferance the civility so proffered. He sat down at the end of the table on the left hand of the vice-president, who was *ex officio* the youngest member of the club; and, without laying down his hat, or being asked to put it aside, he drank his bumper or two of claret, bowing cold and, I thought, proud acknowledgments to the nods and "your healths," that were flung at him. Nobody seemed to think it necessary to pay him any attention beyond that; and the conversation went on without any interruption, except one, at which I could not help being struck with some surprise. Following the example of the president, all the company (myself excepted) simultaneously put their hands into their pockets, and pulled forth their note-cases, or purses, or a single note or two, lying loosely for the occasion, as it were; and the vice-president, taking a bottle-waster in his hand, left his seat, and walked round the table, going successively to each person, beginning with the president, and receiving each individual donation, to which he added his own. As he came near me, I prepared to add mine to the rest; but one of the gentlemen next to me put his hand on my arm, and prevented my intention, saying—

"No, no, don't attempt that; you would desperately wound our poor pensioner's feelings. It is quite a professional affair: he is not exactly a mendicant, but is, rather, receiving, by small instalments, the return of large advances made to the brethren of the robe. Take no notice of this, and I will explain it all to you another time."

Taking the hint, I made no offer of contribution, and I avoided as much as I could any expression of wonderment or curiosity. The vice-president, when he had made his gathering, folded up the notes, which I could

see were chiefly those of the lowest sums in circulation, single pounds or guineas; but one or two caught my eye of five times that amount. He then politely handed the packet to the visitor, who immediately rose, made a gentlemanly bow to the president, and several similar inclinations of the head to the rest of the company. "Good evening, Mr. M'Ronan!" sounded from every voice; but no one moved, until I, somewhat indiscreetly, rose from my seat—but I was very young, and had not learned the *decorum* of smothering one's feelings, even at the certainty of wounding another's; and I could not help a blush of mingled shame and pity rising on my cheek, when I saw the indifference with which the party witnessed the look of humiliation and proud sorrow that came from that careworn face, as it withdrew from the room.

I took the earliest opportunity—indeed it was that very evening—to request the promised explanation from my neighbour; and he gave me the following sketch of the causes of the reduced gentleman's situation and circumstances.

Phelim M'Ronan, of Ronanstown, Esq., was, for aught he knew to the contrary, the father of the gentleman who had so much excited my attention. We must go back almost half way into the last century, to figure to our minds the bearing and character of an Irish squire, such as Mr. Phelim M'Ronan undoubtedly was; and having let our minds fix themselves there, I will leave to the individual imaginations of my readers all the details of appearance and manners appertaining to this personage. In fact, I never saw as much as his picture; nor was my informant able to give me any particulars of his general conduct and habits. His information was confined to nearly one trait of character, one fact, one phrase almost; but, from that scanty hint, I think I have formed a very tolerable notion of Squire M'Ronan's person, disposition, and manners, with the sagacity expected from the Grecian of old, to whom a single brick was offered, as a specimen of the house he was about to purchase. I imagine him, then, tall, gaunt, phlegmatic, and unamiable—looking harsh things, even

when he did not say them, and seldom saying them, only because he thought he could look them more harshly; but when he *did* say them, giving a bitter and biting emphasis to every syllable, that left the listener no chance of escape from his severity.

Of his wife I have still fewer materials for a sketch. But I figure her to myself a passionate, yet strong-minded woman, liable to be agitated to the very depths of feeling by a sarcasm; and having wherewith in her heart to return it more bitterly—tipped with gall, as it were, like an arrow shot back to one's enemy with new poison on its barb.

These form a brace of unprepossessing characters, and are not very flattering specimens of Irish life. But there is a great deal of what is Irish in them, notwithstanding; and had I been able to have filled up each meagre sketch, with the many redeeming merits so profusely springing in the same soil—the generosity, the courage, the warm-heartedness, and the indigenous humour, that runs over the whole surface of the national character—the squire and his lady would, no doubt, appear much less repulsive than, I fear, they now must to my readers, as well as myself. I have borne hard upon them, I confess: and, after all, I form my judgment but on *one phrase* recorded of the man; and I paint the woman only from her one solitary repetition of it, as if I had judged of the extent and formation of a cavern from the echo it sent back to a single sound. That important phrase was, "And there, my darling, is a bone to pick!"

Such was invariably Phelim M'Ronan's short and pithy winding-up to the matrimonial squabbles which arose at times between him and "the misthress;" such the simple retort with which he replied to many a volley of hot-headed and warm-hearted intemperance in word and gesture. Whenever his "darling Nelly," assailed him with a torrent of abuse, in the violent paroxysms to which he loved to work her up, he used quietly to listen, with a smile of true sardonic twist upon his lips; and then, leisurely taking out his snuff-box, and tapping it, and opening it, and taking an ample

pinch, and returning the box to his waistcoat pocket, he would utter some half-expressed sneer, some irritating equivocation, or sarcastic hint, and adding to it the never-failing *refrain*, "and there, now, my darling Nelly, is a bone to pick,"—he would stalk out of the room, gently closing the door.

"Oh that he had but banged it after him! that he had but sworn an oath or two! that he had but stormed, or fumed, or grown red, or pale!—any thing, in short, but have shown that cold-blooded command of himself!" would the poor "misthress," no doubt, exclaim to herself, when left alone to gnaw *the bone* thus flung to her. And then, as she got cool and calm herself, and the servants and neighbours remarked how soon she recovered from her bursts of passion, and she smiled on and fondled "Phelim Aroon," or "Phelim Avich," or "Phelim Alanna," or Phelim with any other epithet of endearment, every one wondered how she could so quickly shake off the fit; and she was universally pronounced to be a most forgiving wife, and "the very sowl of a kind-hearted crathur."

But these shallow observers were all wrong, and the character of Mrs. M'Ronan was much too deep for their fathoming. For never did a more desperate or deadly spirit of revenge lurk under the semblance of good-nature and forgiveness. At what period this dark passion arose, how it was fostered, or when it was fully developed in her mind, it is not possible even to guess. Nor can conjecture penetrate the mystery of thoughts and feelings which it put into fermentation, and at last settled into decision. We may not trace the workings of every diabolical suggestion which rose, self-engendered, in the mind of this woman. How often did she plan her scheme of revenge? What were the means first thought of, how canvassed, how long considered, why rejected? Was the poison ever bought or mixed, the knife whetted and concealed—the bravo tampered with or hired? Has conscience, or cowardice, or woman's softness caused the dose to be destroyed, or the weapon cast aside? Heaven alone can tell—for the criminal carried her secrets with her to the grave; and it was only on its very

verge that she compassed the execution of her fiend-like purpose—different, indeed, from the vulgar modes of vengeance glanced at above, and, oh! how much more effective to agonize the heart to which a dagger's thrust had been mercy.

Every human being has his ruling passion and particular prejudice, independent of the individual traits of disposition which distinguish him from his fellows. Phelim M'Ronan's *passion* was love for his children; his *prejudice*, family pride. He had two sons, born in the two first years of his marriage with Miss Ellinor O'Sullivan, the "darling Nelly" of my story; and these boys were worthy scions of the family trees from the graft of which they sprung. M'Ronan of Ronanstown was a name and title as old as any in the province; and "O'Sullivan of the Brakes" spoke, in its very sound, an antiquity and nobleness which wanted no confirmation from the herald's office. It was hard to say which family was the more ancient, or the more distinguished in all the characteristics that give honour to a race. M'Ronan felt his blood to be at once thick and pure, and it seemed to tingle in his veins like liquid amber. He was convinced, at any rate, that it was not like the blood of almost any one else, and he paused long before he would consent to let it join in the current of even that of O'Sullivan. But, after mature consideration, he made the match which head and heart, interest and inclination, seemed so fully to justify; and as his children were successively presented to him, he glowed with proud conviction of continuing unsullied and perfect, what ought to have been, if it was not, "a race of kings."

But the M'Ronans and O'Sullivans, though no longer monarchs, had a large portion of honorary sovereignty attached to them. The first of these families, which is more particularly our concern, had rights of prescription almost equal to those of law. Their thousands of acres of mountain and bog were peopled by a fine hardy, devoted tenantry, who voluntarily yielded privileges of feudality which the statute book no longer recognized, and Phelim M'Ronan wanted little to persuade him that

he was himself as much a prince as were his numerous recorded ancestors, who ruled for many a century of by-gone glory, over the district of which he still retained a portion. Nothing, in short, could exceed his arrogance of spirit, and it was rather heightened than softened by the unbounded affection for his offspring, which, in a mind so harsh and haughty, was more likely to be mere instinct than constitutional tenderness. He looked on his two boys, Remmy and Patrick, with a fierce delight, that was compounded as much of pride as of love; but, be the elements of his attachment to them what they might, it *was* an attachment of almost unparalleled force. I am not able to say in what proportion Mrs. M'Ronan sympathized with her husband's feelings on this point. She might have loved her children in their infancy—she might have been proud of them in their boyhood—she might have indulged in visions of their full grown prosperity—let us hope she did! for a mother without such feelings is little less than a monster, and I would fain believe such out of nature. But whatever her share in those sentiments might once have been, the time came when they all withered before the blight which swept across her heart; and they perished in the shade of the Upas of Revenge which her husband's persecuting insolence had engendered. In the very hour of death, she sacrificed at the shrine of this demoniac passion not only the whole earthly happiness of the father, but all the worldly prospects of the sons.

An illness of long standing, which gave her time for ample preparation, brought Mrs. M'Ronan to death's door; and on the very last day of her existence, at the very latest hour, indeed, having ascertained from her physician that recovery was impossible, and her final moment at hand, she called her husband from an inner room, where he waited in anxiety and agitation, and she summoned him to her bed-side. Mr. M'Ronan was attached to his wife. He had married her from liking as well as from interest. He had gone through life with her, as cordially and contentedly as he had looked to do when he chose her "for better for worse;" and

he saw the parting moment now at hand, with full as much grief, and much more emotion, than he thought such an event could excite in him. He approached the death-bed cautiously, and with a kind expression on his sorrowing face. The doctor, who stood at the open door of the inner room, was witness to the scene; and, not intending any violation of confidence in hearing what passed, he did not scruple to mention it afterwards when Mr. M'Ronan called on him to do so.

"My darling Nelly," said M'Ronan, "can I give you any comfort? Is there any thing you want?" and the words were accompanied by a look of great kindness.

"Hold your tongue, Phelim Aroon," replied his wife, in a tone uniting physical weakness with moral courage; "hold your tongue—I want to speak—only to speak; so offer me nothing, and say nothing. My time is short, and I have something to say to you, worth listening to, Avich!"

"Whatever you please, my dear," said M'Ronan, "only don't fatigue or distress yourself. You are weak, and had better not say much, may be, or wait a bit."

"Phelim Alanna, death won't wait! and I have something on my conscience—something that's choking me till I tell it to you." And here an expression of fierce impatience worked in the muscles of her distorted countenance.

"Then, my darling Nelly," exclaimed the husband, quickly, and alarmed, "will I call in his reverence? Father Michael is in the next room."

"No, no—I have nothing to say to *him*, Phelim. You know, Aroon, it's little I value confession, or ever did—but I must confess one thing to *you*—and you'll forgive me or not as you like, Phelim; but don't be hard with your own Nelly in her last gasp."

"Oh! my darling," sobbed M'Ronan, "don't speak that way to me; you break my heart. I never loved you rightly till now, Nelly. I hope you forgive me all my ill-nature, and that you love your poor Phelim, Nelly, in this sorrowful hour?"

"You never gave me any ill-nature, Phelim Mavourneen, if it wasn't that nasty word that you sometimes

threw at me—and many's the heart-scald it gave me, Phelim Avich! But, the boys, you know, Phelim—it's of them I wanted to speak to you, or *one* of them, any how."

"Oh! whatever you like, my darling. Say whatever you like. It shall be done. All your wishes about the dear boys shall be most faithfully performed. What is it, Nelly? Speak out, if it doesn't tire you, my love."

To this impatient, yet suppressed, burst of paternal affection, the mother replied, by a look of bitterness at once deathlike and deadly, which made the doctor shudder, and seemed to curdle poor M'Ronan's blood.

"I'm going fast, Phelim," faintly murmured the expiring woman. "I have but a minute more to speak to you, Alanna. Listen to me, then! You never knew me to tell a lie, Phelim?"

"Never."

"And you're sure, aren't you, that I wouldn't tell one *now?*"

"Indeed, indeed I *am* sure of it, Nelly."

"Why, then, Phelim, you know the two boys, don't you?"

"To be sure I do, my darling. Oh, then, what is it you have to say about them, Nelly? Tell it to me at once, for you're killing me as well as yourself, honey. The look out of your eyes is terrible—oh, my God! is it laughing you are? Oh, that's quite shocking, Nelly, darling—will I call the doctor, or the priest, my love? What's the matter with you, Nelly—what's the matter?"

She had raised herself up in the bed, and grasped his arm, and fixed her glazed eyes upon him; and her convulsed features seemed indeed to wear a ghastly smile; and, with broken yet distinct utterance, she exclaimed in hollow tones—

"Well, then, Phelim, mind what I say to you; and remember it's the death-gasp that says it; but it's true, quite true, as sure as death itself—one of those boys *is not your child!*—'and there,' Phelim Aroon, 'is a bone to pick for you!'"

She sunk exhausted on the bed; her features strug-

gled with death; a convulsion passed across them, and fixed the hideous expression of laughter which distorted her open mouth. Her strained eyeballs rolled frightfully, and their gaze seemed to follow the movements of her victim! The doctor, the priest, and the nurse rushed into the room, not less attracted by the sight and sound of the woman's fast-coming death, than by the appalling effect which her last words produced on her husband.

When the horrid sounds of her last articulate sentence reached his ears, he sprang up from his kneeling posture by the bed side, and rushed back some paces, as if electrically repelled from what he heard and saw. He raised his hands above his head with almost maniac gesture, clasped them together, staggered forward again, and, with bent body and strained eyes, exclaimed, in tones that seemed suffocating him as they were uttered—

"Oh, God, Nelly! what did you say? Oh, don't say *that*, darling—any thing, any thing in the world but that! Oh, you're raving, you're raving, aren't you, my own Nelly? Won't you speak another word? One word more Nelly, only one! Oh, which of them, *which* of them, Nelly? For the mercy of Heaven, and the sake of your soul, Nelly, which of them is *mine?* Is it Patrick or Remmy? Oh, tell me, tell me *which*, and I forgive you all, and God forgive you too! Oh, you won't speak—you can't, may be! But make a sign, do, Nelly, dear! If it's Patrick that's *mine*, *my own* child, put up your finger, or nod your head, or any thing, any thing. Or is it Remmy? *Which*, *which*, Nelly, darling? Oh, Jasus! how frightful you're looking at me—laughing! I can't bear it, I can't bear it! Oh, shocking, shocking!" and then, exhausted with horror and suffering, he sank down, and hid his head in the bed-covering.

The priest, the doctor, and the nurse, shocked as they themselves were, did all they could to remove the unfortunate man, and attempted to assuage his suffering. They implored him to pay no attention to the incoherent expressions of a dying woman; they cautioned

him not to embitter her parting moments by his violence; they urged the imprudence of his alarming the attendants, who crowded the outer room and lobby, and to whom he was betraying this death-bed rhapsody: but nothing was of any avail. He regained his standing posture, and continued to pour his vehement entreaties for explanation into the death-deafened ears of the lifeless body: for, while the priest and the physician prepared their last rites and remedies, the subject of their solicitude was far and for ever beyond its reach!

"Oh, Nelly, Nelly, won't you speak one word more, nor make a sign even?" exclaimed the unhappy M'Ronan, recovering fortitude enough to look again upon the features from the frightful contortions of which he had just shrunk. As he raised his eyes towards the bed, he was addressed at once by the three witnesses to the scene.

"It's all over, Mr. M'Ronan—the pulse is extinct!" said the doctor.

"Let her sowl depart in peace!" piously murmured the priest.

"Arrah, master, agrah, let the corpse be quiet! Oh, wisasthrew, wisasthrew! and is it dead you are, ahagar?" loudly exclaimed the nurse, flinging herself between M'Ronan and the senseless remains of his wife, and beginning the wailings of the Coronach before the regular time.

"Dead!" fiercely uttered M'Ronan, throwing incredulous and reproachful glances at those around him —"dead! Impossible! She wouldn't, she couldn't depart, with that terrible word in her mouth, without easing my mind as well as her own conscience. No, no, she can't be dead—she's only fainting. Hush, hush —give her air to recover a bit. Oh, Christ! not mine —not *my* child; and which of them is it? For the love of Heaven, father Michael, say something or other to me! Doctor, dear, can't you save her—if it was only to let her speak the one word, Patrick or Remmy? Oh, save her, save her, if it's in your art to do it! There's nothing I wouldn't give—Ballymagrath and Glenshoughlin—the two town-lands shall be all yours—ay, the half

of Ronan's-town itself! Oh God! my head is splitting open!—save her, save her!"—and, after this incoherent and heart-rending utterance of his distracted feelings, he sunk into the arms of the people around him, his two sons included; all the family and the "followers" being attracted to the room by the combination of woeful sounds which rung through the ancient mansion.

In due course of time Mrs. M'Ronan was waked and buried, with all the ceremonies usual on those occasions. Nothing could exceed the anguish of mind which the unfortunate widower endured. From the hour of his wife's death till that in which the grave closed over her mortal remains, he never slept. The notion that she could not be dead—that she *would* not die and leave him in such despairing uncertainty, haunted him night and day. He could not shake off that weakness, though he saw the cold and colourless corpse before him—and even when the coffin was nailed down, or, still later, when the earth closed over it, M'Ronan seemed to strain forward, with eager eyes and listening ears, as if to catch some movement, or some sound of returning life, from her who was gone for ever.

And never was the sound of recovered happiness to breathe its gentle influence on M'Ronan's mind. From the moment in which the self-accusing revelation, or self-damning falsehood, left the lips of his either-way guilty wife, he felt as if a coal of fire had fallen upon his heart, and consumed it with slow agony. But he did not, all at once, sink under this affliction. His iron nerve and harsh nature resisted for a while the wasting torture, and neither physical nor moral suffering seemed to bear him down. He summoned every energy of body and mind to oppose the malady that gnawed upon him. He roused up every power of reason and resistance. He strove to believe the kind assurances of his friends, that the dying woman only raved, and that her horrid communication had no truth in it. But then he recalled her solemn tones—her collected manner—her eager asseverations; and he could not doubt what, in such a way, and at such a time, she had revealed.

"Could it be," he would ask himself and others,

"that a woman like her, of integrity and unsullied fame, of a race as pure, or almost as pure, as my own, would, at the hour of death, have *invented* such a horrid means of agonizing me for ever, and ruining her children, for at least they are both *hers!* or could the arch fiend have been permitted by Heaven to steal into her dying frame, and prompt the utterance of such a lie? Oh, no—oh, no! 'tis too true. It was conscience, working in her powerful mind, and swelling her proud heart. But the truth would out, and she scorned to die, deceiving me."

Thus satisfied of the fact—for *he* never dreamt of Revenge having suggested the terrible retaliation, nor would he listen for a moment to the suggestion that gave, what he considered, such a monstrous solution to the mystery—his next source of anguish was in the utter impossibility of ascertaining *which* of the sons was "not his child." In every way to which calculation or conjecture could torture probabilities or chances, did M'Ronan try the different bearings of this perplexing case. He retraced with painful accuracy all the circumstances of domestic conduct, from the day of his marriage till the birth of both the boys, for he was resolved to leave nothing unreverted to, which might throw a chance beam of light upon the gloom of his almost hopeless examination. He recalled the early months of his union, when his darling Nelly was in seeming his, and his alone; before those *bones* of contention were flung by his vile temper to mar their wedded happiness. He then dwelt on their first differences, their disputes, their quarrels. He summoned up the memory of his wife's recreations, her acquaintances and connexions. He went over again the visitors at Ronanstown Castle, his wife's young cousin, Rory O'Sullivan, a rattling, fox-hunting, off-handed fellow; then a certain captain in the black horse, a clever, handsome man, with a laced cocked hat and big whiskers, who had been quartered in a town hard by, and used to come out often to dine and sleep at the castle. Others, too, rose in magic succession on the self-tortured mind of M'Ronan, like the apparitions flitting be-

fore Macbeth's deluded vision, each one seeming to smile on the questionable children,

"And point at them for his."

In the agitation of his conflicting doubts, and fears, and hopes, M'Ronan would sometimes fix, with a sort of desperate reliance, on one of the boys as *his;* and then the whole force of his fierce nature would turn into bitter hatred against the other. Violence of every kind was sure to be lavished on the youth who, for the time, was illegitimate. But the shifting of some thought, the turn of some surmise, the shadow of some old suspicion flitting across his brain, would at once reverse his opinion, and then, in a paroxysm of detestation, he would commit acts of the worst tyranny against his late favourite. These grievous alternations of judgment and feeling might, however, have been borne, and, in the end, perhaps, forgiven by the unfortunate young men. But a more serious consequence resulted from the distracted father's incertitude. Almost the whole of his property, and it was a large one, was in his own power, he having joined his father in one of those tricks of legal legerdemain, by which the offspring of a respectable race may be, in a truly Irish way, ruined in perspective, and robbed of their inheritance before they possess it. With the power of disposing of his estate as he chose, he had always had the intention of dividing it share and share alike between his two sons, until the death-bed legacy of misery, left to the unhappy trio by the wife and mother, produced the effects which I have detailed. But now, his disposition of his property was made, reversed, confirmed, and retracted oftentimes in the course of a month, a week, or a day. Wills and codicils innumerable were drawn out, executed, and destroyed—but not *all*, unfortunately for the unhappy successors to this wretched man.

I pass over many minor afflictions falling on the family. M'Ronan's total estrangement from his wife's connexions, who were furiously indignant at his receiving as fact what they persisted in believing the ravings

of a death-bed, and who, one and all, repelled such a dishonouring stain, cast, even by herself, on any daughter of the chaste house of O'Sullivan. Then there was the still more deplorable breaking up of the mutual affection which had from infancy subsisted between the brothers. They long resisted the efforts of their father to fill them, each by turns, with his own dark doubts, and the hatred of which they were successively the object. But as years grew on them, and the interested feelings of manhood took place of youth's generous impulses, they, little by little, imbibed the poison which had embittered the sources of their father's peace of mind. They, in their several hours of favouritism, became by degrees corrupted by the sunshine of unnatural indulgence in which they basked—and when in their respective turns they suffered the indignities and ill-treatment they had awhile been free from, the change brought an irresistible feeling of dislike and jealousy, and finally of detestation against each other.

In short, when Phelim M'Ronan, utterly worn out by his misery, followed his wife to what was, I fear, her unquiet grave, ten or a dozen years after her death, his two sons, then about thirty years of age, were as desperate enemies to each other, as if no tie of blood, or former feeling of affection, had ever united them together. I forget which was in possession of Phelim M'Ronan's favour, and consequently the named successor to his fortune, at the moment of this crisis. But it was of little matter—for two wills were discovered, bearing the very same date—and it was even said, that on the day they were executed, the one preceding his death, M'Ronan, in his tortured anxiety, had actually made and reversed full half a dozen of those conflicting documents. The greater portion, however, were destroyed, but the partizans of either son took especial care, in the confusion of such a time, to preserve one each; enough, as it turned out, to utterly ruin the last remnant of the ancient family, and scatter their possessions to the winds.

Need I say that one law-suit immediately followed? Perhaps a *hundred*, in various shapes and ramifications,

would be nearer the mark. For five-and-twenty years, every court in the kingdom, of law or equity, was familiar with the sounds of M'Ronan *versus* M'Ronan—Remmy against Patrick—and Patrick against Remmy. In every possible way in which the question could be tried it *was* tried. By every exertion of talent, and every effort of chicanery, the claims of the respective litigants were twisted, and turned, and contorted—but nothing could make either straight, for they serpentined in a crooked path! At last all was ruined—all gone. Each brother had, in his turn, been a dozen times the possessor or the outcast from his paternal mansion—for one had as good a right as the other to claim paternity until it was disproved. In law, at any rate, they were both the sons of Phelim M'Ronan. Opposing decrees and verdicts, confirmatory or upsetting sentences from higher courts, appeals without end, and judgments without effect, were accumulated in this memorable contest, in a magnificence of confusion that put all other causes to the blush.

But at length the contest *was* terminated, as my readers know how—by the utter exhaustion of funds, and the total alienation of the property from the hands of the joint heirs to the calamities it entailed. Of the two sons, both reduced to beggary, one emigrated to America, the other remained in Ireland. The first with the hope of forgetting his bad fortunes, and perhaps of acquiring good ones; the second with a lingering notion that still, by being on the watch, some lucky trump might turn up, though the game seemed done, and without calculating, it would seem, by what hand the cards were next to be played. This one, and I know not if it was Patrick or Remmy, was the one I saw, a pensioner of assize on the half yearly bounty of the barristers who for years had fattened on his earthly all—and in that capacity alone, I believe I may say, a very unusual, if not totally unique, specimen of his species.

THE

MAISON DE SANTÉ.

CHAPTER I.

I had finished a long mountain ramble, not a great distance from one of the southern seaports of France, and I was on the point of entering the town which had for some hours bounded my view, when a large house, at a short distance from the road, caught my attention. I was more particularly attracted by a board affixed to the top of the handsome cast-iron gates, and on which were painted, in huge letters, (worthy of the largest metropolis in Europe, let alone the provincial capital before me), the words which I have placed at the head of this page—

"MAISON DE SANTE."

There was something extremely soothing and inviting in this appellation. Not that I felt myself ill; but I was fatigued. I had overwalked myself; and I was a little out of conceit with my excursion, from having met with nothing beyond the common course of those events which *any* tourist might have fallen in with. I either wanted repose, or thought I wanted it—which is just the same thing, and it suddenly occurred to me to try the gentle accommodations of this "house of health," instead of encountering the bustle of a hotel.

I knew that establishments of this description were common in France, for the reception of real or fancied

invalids, where actual convalescence or imaginary illness found attention and relief. My ideas of a *maison de santé* were as distinct as possible from those we attach to an hospital. I imagined nothing of the loathsomeness of disease nor the danger of contagion—and so far I judged rightly; but there is another signification attached to the name, of which I was ignorant, till experience taught it to me, in the painful way I am about to relate.

As soon as it occurred to me to make this house of promise my resting-place for a time, I proceeded to its external examination. I quitted the road, and walked round the tolerably large extent of the premises, which were completely enclosed within a high wall, above which were to be seen the roofs of some of the offices, as well as that of a detached house, of much smaller dimensions than the principal one, which seemed to occupy the centre of the garden, for all around it appeared the tops of fruit-trees in full blossom; and, closer to the wall, rows of flowering limes and graceful poplars promised a fresh and fragrant shade.

"What an enviable retreat," thought I, "to the valetudinarian or the philosopher! Sheltered in those delicious walks, and free from the world's intrusion, how happily might the time glide away!" and I forthwith resolved to seek the entrance, and apply for a temporary admission to the quiet enjoyments I was picturing to myself. The iron gate, to which I before alluded, was flanked with a lofty and highly ornamented railing, of the same workmanship, extending for several yards at either side. The devices were richly wrought, and displayed various initial letters turned backwards and forwards through each other, with coronets and heraldic signs in open work. The place had evidently belonged to some noble family, which was apparently superseded by the doctor's, whose salubrious announcement hung above; and the professional taste of the actual possessor was displayed in the addition of various bronze serpents, twisting through the aristocratical ornaments before mentioned. This emblem of medical occupation, intruding on the noble and chivalrous asso-

ciations around it, seemed to my mind like the devil gliding into Paradise; and I looked from it to the court-yard in front of the house, and then to the house itself. The space before and about the mansion was wide and straggling, and the solemn looking pile of building spoke its ancient importance. It was of that heavy and wo-inspiring style of architecture common to the châteaux of France, and one of those incongruous contrasts to the spirit and temper of the people, which are not the less surprising from being so frequent.

"This place," thought I, "is, after all, not so pleasant. The very look of that dull stone mass is enough to give one the vapours. I believe I shall not attempt to penetrate further;" and I was on the point of turning away towards the town, when a middle-aged, fat, comely woman came forwards to the gate through which I was making my *reconnoissance*, and, with a courteous, but still a hurried, manner, she spoke to me through the railing.

"Pray, wait a little, Sir," said she, smiling. "I suppose you want to see the doctor: you shall see him in a moment—the porter will shew you into the house presently. You will find things a little confused; but I beg you to excuse that. I have a shocking set of servants—they don't obey my orders in the least: indeed I am quite afraid of them—they treat me as if every thing was theirs, not mine! Here comes one of them—the insolent porter;" and she turned quickly away, throwing a look which seemed of mingled fear and anger at the rough-looking fellow who advanced towards me. He, in his turn, sent after her a glance of insolent severity; and then addressed me with fawning civility, requesting to know my business, and at the same time unlocking the gate and removing a ponderous bar by which it was also secured.

I told him that my object had not much of *business* in it; and as I entered the court-yard, somewhat marvelling at the security which guarded it, I briefly explained that if I could procure accommodation in the house for a week or so, I was disposed to take up my quarters there. He replied that he had no doubt such an ar-

rangement might be made, and begged leave to conduct me to the doctor's study, where I should have an opportunity of learning every particular as to terms and conditions from the head master of the establishment.

"But cannot your mistress, there, settle the affair with me?" asked I.

"My mistress!"

"Yes; that lady, who accosted me just now: is not she the mistress of the house?"

"No, Sir."

"Indeed! why, she told me as much as that she was."

"I dare say she did."

"Who is she, then? and what did she mean by speaking as if the place were her own?"

"This is the way to the doctor's study, Sir," said my guide, cutting short my interrogatories, and leading up a narrow passage, which was terminated by a door covered with green baize. As we arrived at this entrance, the face of the fat lady looked ruddily in upon me from a little window opening on the court-yard, and she winked at me, significantly but unintelligibly, making use of various gestures, the meaning of which I could not divine. The porter soon perceived her, and instantly put her to flight by a frown of fierce meaning, while his hand seemed clenched mechanically, and a suppressed stamp echoed through the passage. No time was left me for astonishment, for the porter's tap at the door was answered by an immediate invitation to enter, and I found myself in an instant ushered into the presence of the doctor himself.

He eyed me closely and quickly, to discover my complaint, I suppose; but his scrutinizing gaze found no symptoms of malady, and he politely offered me a seat, and resumed his own, putting on an air of attention to what I might be about to say. I soon relieved his anxiety, if he felt any, by proposing to become his lodger for a week on his own terms, and clearly explaining that I did not require his professional care, but was merely desirous of retirement and repose.

"Aha!" said the over-quicksighted doctor, "I see

what it is—a literary man! You want solitude, Sir, to finish some work—isn't it so? Yes, yes; your countrymen are great tourists and great writers: you, no doubt, require information as to our cathedral and the Roman ruins in yonder suburb—would you examine the manuscripts in the library, and inquire into the antique remains in which our town is so rich? Well, Sir, you have fallen in a lucky place—if any man could aid your learned researches, I am he! I love literature and science, and am not myself unknown in the World of Letters! As a physician I have studied much: chemistry, botany, geology, pathology, and physiology are, of course, at my fingers' ends—comparative anatomy is like my A, B, C—astronomy is just as familiar to me as mathematics; but metaphysics are *my passion!* Yes, I confess to you that all the material attributes of nature, in her thousand modifications, have no charms for me in comparison with the sublime and abstract speculations of the mind! The doctrine of the general affections, and that alone, is worthy of exciting the enthusiasm of genius! It rarefies and refines the soul, and fits us for the exercise of those benevolent duties which man owes man, and which are my sole inducements to the profession which I practise!—Eh! what do I see? What the devil's that? Michel, Michel, Michel!" abruptly vociferated the doctor, snapping the chain of his eloquence, violently ringing a little bell, and making bustling preparations to quit the room. While he twisted his brown Brutus wig into a proper position, and pulled on his purple silk dressing-gown, which had lain on a chair beside him, the porter (the said Michel) rushed into the room.

"This is a pretty business, Michel—this is your care, is it? Look yonder at the general's son, again making love to the countess! Fly out into the garden, and seize him! Prepare the leeches and a strong blister instantly—I will be with you in a moment!"

The surly dog looked aghast at the first part of this announcement, and grinned a frightful grin of enjoyment at the orders which followed. He darted away, and the doctor after him, seemingly forgetful or indifferent to my presence.

And left thus alone, I was really far from feeling at my ease. I thought I had fallen amongst a very queer set, and scarcely knew what to make of them. I moved towards the window which looked out on the garden, and as I passed the table at which the doctor had been writing, my eye caught the loose pages of a printed book, with corrections and erasures, the whole in that state of interesting incompleteness which experience afterwards taught me was technically peculiar to *proof sheets*. I read the title, which was as follows—

MAN AND METAPHYSICS;

OR,

THE RIDDLE RESOLVED.

BY

ŒDIPUS SECUNDUS.

And the next page, which seemed introductory, began with a part of the very speech which the doctor had just delivered to me: "The doctrine of the general affections, and that alone, is worthy of exciting the enthusiasm of genius," *et cetera*—and that much satisfied me; I turned to the window, and looking out to the garden, perceived a very mild and interesting looking lad, in apparently playful conversation with a tall and showy woman, in a fashionable morning déshabillé. Not being as well versed in the science of the general affections as the ontological doctor, I should not of myself have discovered that this youth had been lovemaking; but be his occupation what it might, it soon received a very violent interruption. Michel, the porter, came forward with most malicious speed, and flew upon the youthful gallant, who shuddered and turned pale, as the ruffian approached and rudely seized him by the collar. The doctor was in a moment on the scene of action, and he furiously pushed the countess, as he called her, for some paces off the gravel walk, and then turned to the young man, and, aided by Michel, led him towards the house, which stood fragrantly sheltered in the middle of the

garden. My blood seemed, at one and the same time, to freeze with surprise, and boil with indignation. I followed the doctor and his myrmidon with my eyes, and was only restrained from rushing out, by the fear that my premature interference might be of injury, instead of service. "What!" exclaimed I, aloud, "is this a specimen of the benevolence which is this vile hypocrite's only inducement to follow his profession!"

"Benevolence, indeed!" said a voice, close to me, in a tone of irony, and a very odd sort of chuckle closed the exclamation. I looked round, and saw "my fat friend" standing beside the window. "Benevolence!" repeated she, "no, he has none of that quality, depend on it. He is a tyrant of the worst stamp; and God help you for having fallen into his clutches! your life is'nt safe an hour. Did'nt I wink at you as you came along the passage, as much as to tell you not to come in? But now, that you are here, take care of yourself! See how they have used me; a slave in my own house. But the prime minister has an eye on them, and I shall have my revenge yet!"

"For God's sake," asked I, impatiently, "what are they about to do to that poor young man? What is the meaning of all this?"

"To do with him! what they will do with you, poor thing, by and by—to bleed and blister him half dead, and then put—"

"Holloa, holloa! Madame!" cried the doctor, springing forward from the shrubbery, "what are you about there, eh? Ha, ha! Is this the work you are at? To your room instantly! and Michel, I say, prepare the shower bath for this lady. Be off, Madame, you are too fat!"

"Heavens!" said I, as the lady waddled off, the doctor at her heels, and Michel close to them—"heavens! what tyranny is this! a house of *health*, indeed! What! blisters and bleeding for politeness—and a shower bath for too much fat! Let me fly this horrid den!" And I snatched up my hat, and attempted to open the door; but my blood seemed to run the wrong way in my veins, on my finding that it was firmly fastened on the outside.

Before I had time enough granted me to indulge in the apprehensions which such a situation might have excited, I heard the cheerful sounds of the key, grating through the intricacies of the lock; and in a moment the doctor was before me, and the door briskly closed behind him. Not wishing to betray any appearance of uneasiness to whomsoever might enter, I retreated towards the table; and when the doctor came in, he found me in apparent carelessness, looking over his books.

"My dear Sir," cried he, with an air of sneaking civility, "I ask a thousand pardons for my inadvertence. I really locked the door unconsciously, as I went out to punish that refractory and furious young man—such is the force of habit. I am obliged to keep most of my patients under lock and key."

"But not your *lodgers*, doctor, I hope ?"

"And a troublesome set they are, I assure you," continued he, heedless of my interruption. "You may see how I am tormented. Such is my reward at present, for unceasing endeavours to promote the health and happiness of my fellow creatures! But here, Sir," pointing to the *proof sheets*—"here is the immortal recompense for all. This great work which I am now about to give to the world, this treatise on the true analogy between mind and matter, is the unfading remuneration for days and nights of care and study. To hand my name down to posterity as a benefactor of mankind is to me—"

At this moment the cadaverous phiz of Michel appeared at the door. He beckoned the doctor, who quickly joined him; and the porter said, in a half suppressed voice, but still loud enough for me to hear it,

"The old priest is outrageous at his dinner. He exclaims against the fish, which he says is rotten, and protests that the soup is *lengthened out** beyond all endurance."

"The old scoundrel !" muttered the doctor. "Give him dry bread for supper; and if he dares to murmur, clap on the *camisole*."

* *La soupe allongée* is a very common phrase for that which is very plentifully *watered* to meet the calls of additional consumers.

The ready porter nodded a cheerful assent, and the doctor turned towards me with a smile.

"Another interruption!" exclaimed he. "It is thus my most agreeable moments are continually broken in upon"—and the compliment was accompanied by a cringing bow. "One of my poor hypochondriacs, a religious enthusiast, just sent a message to me."

"What a pleasure it must be to you," said I, with a severe emphasis, "to have the care of the old and ailing, and the power to smooth their sufferings, whether they be of fact or imagination."

"Yes, indeed it is," answered he, with a deep sigh; "and the consciousness of doing my duty towards them is my only return for time and trouble, and, I must say, for the ingratitude that nine-tenths of them give me. You would scarcely believe," continued he, while his hypocrisy put me in a fever of indignation, "that this immense establishment is a dead loss to me. No profit, no comfort, and but little thanks for vast sacrifices, although I have sixty patients within these walls."

"Sixty!" exclaimed I, with an involuntary shudder, at imagining the quantum of misery which must be daily dealt out to those wretches—"Sixty! and pray what may be the nature of their chief complaints?"

"Oh—I scarcely know what to call it exactly—but nervousness, perhaps, explains it better than any other word. In fact, your own complaint, my dear Sir."

"*My* complaint!" said I, briskly; "what do you mean? I have no complaint—I never was better in my life."

"So you think, my good Sir; but believe me you are deceiving yourself. I see the agitated state of your nerves, and know your sensations better than you possibly can. The very fact of your voluntarily seeking this asylum is a proof that nature was making a collateral effort, as we may call it, for relief. A man in sound health would not have been instinctively prompted to come here."

"In his sound *senses*," thought I.

"But trust to my care," continued the doctor, "and I will soon bring you about. Moderate diet, gentle ex-

ercise, tepid baths, with my celebrated ptisan, and a couple of months here, will restore the true tone, both moral and physical. You may, at your leisure, continue your work; and treat of what it may, history, science, or statistics, depend upon me for ample information. You will want no library while I am at hand. Let me feel your pulse."

I rejected the proffered pressure of his fingers, and shrunk from him altogether; and the words of the fat lady seemed to ring in my ears. I could not help feeling as if I had got into the cell of a magician, whose very words could conjure up a flight of evil spirits. Then the aspect of his odious familiar, Michel the porter, flitted before me, and I fancied the many of that stamp which must be at his call. I did not exactly like my situation, but I felt a wild sort of curiosity to know more of the place and its inmates, and I at once resolved to feign assent to the doctor's opinion of *my case*, although I knew it would be hard to deceive the cunning, which had stamped the proofs of nearly half a century's practice on his sallow visage. After a pause of apparent reflection, I said—and I thought, as I spoke, that vanity was the outwork in which a breach was most practicable—

"I really don't know how it is, doctor, but I believe I *am* a little out of order. What talents you must possess! I never should have known I was ill but for your ready perception. I thought I was only fatigued, but I do believe there is something gone wrong in the nervous machinery. There is my wrist for you."

He took hold of the wrist accordingly, and having felt it for some minutes, he shook his head, and gravely exclaimed, though evidently elated by my ready assent, and the respect he thought he had inspired—

"Ay, ay, 'tis even as I thought; but a few ounces of blood taken away, and a slight blister laid on, will soon set all to rights." The prophetic words of the fat lady again came to my mind, and I started away from the doctor's grasp. My abruptness caused a corresponding start in him, and a fierce and authoritative frown curled as if in habitual motion over his bushy brows. I was

put quite on my mettle; and I said, in a calm, but very determined way,

"Now I'll tell you what, my good doctor, you and I must understand each other. I wish much to stay for a short time in your house, not for the *month* you talked of, but for a week, or perhaps two. I have a profound opinion of your talents—I am even willing to believe myself not quite well, since you tell me I am not, but you cannot persuade me I am *ill*, and depend upon it you shall not treat me as if I were. Your tepid baths and ptisans I adopt—your blistering and bleeding I reject—a retired and quiet bed-room is all I ask—I require but little attendance—I will dine at your family table—I shall profit by your society, although I am not an author—but Heaven knows what my fate *may*, some time or another, make me! I want none of your abstruse knowledge or occult research—I study but little, and when at all, it is chiefly what one of our poets calls the 'proper study of mankind'—I prefer nature to books, and man to mathematics, or metaphysics either, doctor. I think I may find some odd specimens here, and I give you your own terms."

"Well, well, Sir, agreed: it is a bargain," said the doctor. "Heaven knows, I don't want more patients, and I hold profit in scorn; but an agreeable companion and a man of taste—"

"Don't drive me away, my good doctor, to prove my right to this premature praise. Give me a little time and fair play, and we shall get on very well, I have no doubt. Pray order some one to show me to my room, and send for my portmanteau to the office of the *diligence*. Here is my passport—and now, good day, until your dinner hour."

Whether he was pleased with, or imposed on by the off-hand way in which this was spoken, I could not exactly tell; but he shook my hand with apparent cordiality, and assured me that every thing should be done in my own way. He then rang a bell, and a good featured, olive-coloured woman entered, with a bunch of keys at her girdle.

"This is my housekeeper," said the doctor. "Ma-

dame Jacqueline, you will please to give every attention to this gentleman. Place him in a quiet good room, in the eastern wing, and follow his directions in all things."

Madame Jacqueline made a silent and assenting inclination of the head, and I quitted the study after her. Tracing the way she led me, I was soon installed in a very neat apartment at the top of the house; and in a short time a male attendant provided me with every thing necessary for my comfort.

CHAPTER II.

My readers will by this time discover, although I really did not, till afterwards, that I had fixed myself in a private mad-house. In reading the circumstances as I have sketched them, the fact will soon speak for itself; but in the *occurrence* of those events there was an indistinctness and confusion that did not so soon bring conviction. But this is always the case. The reader of a recital is ever on the watch for something surprising or remarkable; while in acting the very scene we afterwards describe, we are unprepared for what is coming; and a hundred little transactions, omitted in the narration, weaken the impression of facts as they happen, by diverting our attention, and consequently rendering it less acute. The over scrupulous delicacy of the French language, too, had helped to keep *me* in the dark on this occasion. What foreigner could suppose that "a house of health" meant a mad-house? It does so, however, on the same principle that a "*monarchie pure*" means a despotism. But the reader must please for a while to consider me ignorant of the precise nature of my quarters, and make allowance for my dulness, in having supposed them of a much less questionable and more lucid kind.

Having arranged my small stock of moveables in the drawers, and on the tables of my chamber, which

pleased me much by its airy and retired position, I walked down stairs, for the purpose of taking a turn in the garden, finding that I had still half an hour to spare before dinner, which I learned from my attendant was fixed for four o'clock. Just as I stepped out of the house, the warning sounds of a bell, rung by the porter, gave notice—not that it was dressing time—but that the already toiletted convalescents might come forth for their promenade, and gain half an hour's extra appetite. And out they came accordingly from various quarters of the mansion, some slipping from the *corps de logis*, like young kangaroos from their mother's bosom, others emerging from the *wings*, east and west, like ducklings or chickens from their feathered shelter. But I did not perceive any to appear from the direction of the smaller house, which peeped dimly through the foliage of its verdant screen.

I was greatly amused at marking the various groups of these hypochondriacs, as I set them all down in my mind. I reckoned thirty-two or thirty-three altogether, male and female. They were of all ages, from puberty to caducity; and appeared, by their costume, to be of various conditions in life, from the plain-dressed *bourgeois* to the richly clad noble. I could not fail to be struck with the remarkable care displayed in the appearance of every individual, whether young or old. Age, *certain* or *uncertain*, had evidently little control over the most natural failing of humanity; and I should have begun to moralize on the variegated aspect of vanity, blooming in the very atmosphere of disease, had I been able to snatch time from the personal inspection of its votaries. They crossed and re-crossed me, however, too rapidly, to let me do more than hastily remark them. The variety of expression in their countenances caught my particular attention, but the more so, because there seemed to be one particular look common to them all, let the general differences have been ever so marked. Although "there was no speculation in their eyes," they had, every one of them, the same kind of abstracted look, which is common to the profoundest speculators. Their mind seemed all abroad; and I thought I might

have knocked at every individual pate, without finding any one at home. Their glances appeared seeking for news, but quite innocent of intelligence. In short, had my reader gazed at them as I did, without knowing as much of them as he now does, he would have been, without doubt, as puzzled and perplexed as I myself was. But they paid back my stare of surprise by a very mortifying look of suspicion. Every one of them seemed to shun me, as a community of wild animals, of any genus, shrinks from an intruder on their pasture. Some of them were dull, silent, and sluggish; others vivacious and talkative. The first sort gloomed past me, with protuberant eyes and a semicircular avoidance of the place I stood on; the latter, and by far most numerous kind, whispered volubly together, threw piercing glances at me, came up close, and then suddenly darted off in all directions, like globules of quicksilver at each other's repulsion; and it only wanted a little neighing and snorting, to convince me that the spirits of so many Houyhnms had transmigrated into these groups of human bodies.

Ten minutes of discomfort had passed in this way, when I was delighted to perceive the fat lady enter the garden, from a low building, which was labelled in its various compartments with the titles of different kinds of baths. The sight of a face that I had seen before was quite consoling. I stepped quickly forward to address the new comer, and was glad to perceive a correspondent alacrity on her part. She had burst upon my sight like the bubbling spring to a traveller in the desert, and the simile was not unapt to her actual appearance:

"Loose were her tresses seen, her zone unbound."

But she was in the act of twisting up the one with her right hand, and fastening the other with her left; and as she squeezed her thick dark hair under her cap (for she was habited *en bourgeoise*, that is to say, without a bonnet,) the water oozed out of it profusely. I cannot say that she seemed exactly modelled on the plan of the Venus Aphrodite, but there was an air of freshness

and vivacity in her rosy cheeks and rapid eye that was not unpleasing, and which spoke the vivifying effects of the shower-bath, from which she had just emerged. To judge, however, by the difficulty with which she buckled her ribbon-belt, the fleshly profusion with which the doctor reproached her, was not decreased by his remedy.

"Hush!" said she, seeing I was about to accost her, "step into the shrubbery here, and I will meet you from the other side."

The diplomatic mixture of mystery and cunning with which this was said, made me think my new acquaintance had more brains than I had given her credit for; and I was determined to "cultivate" her, for the sake of the fertile crop of information which she seemed to promise. I accordingly took a turn or two among the promenades on the broad gravel walk in front of the house; and then, with a somewhat abstracted air, to look less singular than before, I lounged, in apparent carelessness, into the deep shade of laurel and myrtle trees, which formed the hedge of one of the alleys. It was then and there that the first misgivings crept upon me, as to the true nature of the herd I had mixed with. I thought it impossible that so many odd-looking creatures could have been affected, as they all evidently were, from the mere effects of *nervousness*, unless that term was meant to imply the mental abberration which I thought I had perceived. But the appearance of the fat lady, at the far end of the walk, put an end to my cogitations, and her very first words finished my doubts.

"Well, my friend," said she, solemnly, and in an under tone, "you have escaped so far; but the *lettre de cachet* is out—beware of yourself! The prime minister never deceives me. Your dungeon will be damp enough, by and by."

This very horrifying speech put me quite at my ease; and I hope there was nothing unnatural in my being absolutely pleased at the conviction which it brought to me. I was satisfied that I had straggled into the recesses of a Lunatic Asylum; and it being the first time in my life that I had entered such a place, I felt infinite satisfaction in the opportunity afforded me of

seeing the workings of the mind, in an aspect at once so new and so interesting. I had no sensation of personal apprehension, for it was clear that the doctor was satisfied of the error of his first notion, that I might have required his professional care; and, as to any idea of coercion, even if it had crossed my mind, the burlesque denunciations of the fat lady would have removed it, as one poison counteracts the effects of another.

I resolved to take my new friend and her hints quite in her own way; and to receive with no apocryphal hesitation any thing she might say. I was, therefore, about to assume an air of alarm and credulity, and to say something in reply to her address; but a sudden flight from fiction to reality, and a rapid change of subject, brought her to a point of real interest to me, and saved me all my intended acting.

"He is *there*," said she, impressively, and pointing to the garden-house, which was partly visible through the trees and shrubs; "they have him safe enough."

"Who?" asked I, impatiently.

"Why, Vincent de Bouverie, to be sure," answered she; "the young man you saw dragged away awhile ago. There they have him, the wretches! and a sad place it is for the unhappy youth. He is, by this time, fainting to death, I'll warrant it. They have left just blood enough in his veins to make him revive for new tortures. And his beautiful hair, which was just beginning to curl again, is, no doubt, again shorn close enough for the frightful blisters—ay, and it's very likely he has once more got on the *camisole!*"

"And, pray, what is the *camisole?*" demanded I.

"The *straight-waistcoat!*" said she, with a hollow and sepulchral tone, while she grasped my arm, and shuddered as she spoke, and looked around, as if the recollection of something shocking had conjured up the very thing itself.

"You are surprised," continued she, "that I know the English for that word, but there is not a language in Europe in which I do not know its meaning. I once had it on myself—and my father died in it—he dashed his head against the wall of the cell, to which a *lettre de*

cachet had consigned him!—and they robbed me of all, the brutes! even this house! You see how they treat me—but the prime minister is not sleeping all this time."

There was a mixture of the terrible and ludicrous, more in her manner than her words, that made me at once tremble and smile. But the wild abruptness of her transitions gave me no time to dwell on what she said.

"Poor fellow!" continued she, looking towards the small house, and seemingly forgetful of all personal or parental sufferings—"poor Vincent! they'll soon gain their object by getting him out of the world, and then the second brother will come quietly in for all. And as for the countess—"

"Do tell me who is the countess?" said I, somewhat anxious for information as to the cause of poor Vincent's punishment."

"That's more than I can do, for nobody here knows even her name."

"And where is she? I do not see her in the garden."

"I believe not, indeed; she is ordered a ten hours' penance in a tepid bath—but it is not so bad as that ten minutes torture of mine!"

I thought this an exaggeration of my angry informant, but I ascertained afterwards it was quite true. Ten hours in a bath! and such a *remedy* (to take it in its best point of view) at the discretion of any individual! But that is a trifle to what I afterwards learned of the discipline of "a house of health."

"I believe there is an old priest confined here?" asked I, recollecting the doctor's whisperings with Michel, and shocked at the explanation I had so recently received of the word *camisole*, particularly as it applied to him.

"What, old Father Louis, who fancies himself the Pope, and the garden house St. Peter's cathedral? Yes, he is *there*—and if you walk out after dinner, you may hear him singing vespers, if they haven't put the gag between his toothless jaws. But I beg your pardon, Sir—it is almost dinner time, and I expect a let-

ter from the prime minister. So pray excuse me—Good morning, Sir—I wish you a very good morning, Sir—good morning."

These last words were half a dozen times repeated, in a tone of most whimsical formality, and accompanied by a succession of courtesies down to the ground, which continued so long (as the fat lady retreated backwards up the alley) that to save her from her dignified civilities and myself from the chance of laughing in her face, I wheeled suddenly round, and left her to herself.

There seemed an irresistible attraction leading me towards the mysterious building, which imagination, wedded to the vague revelations of the wild creature I had just parted from, quickly peopled with a strange tenantry. Of sixty patients spoken of by the doctor, I had scarcely seen more than half. "Where and *what* are the others?" thought I; "several of them *there*, no doubt, in that sink of cruelty and suffering. If these walls could but speak—and these barred windows send out the secrets of this prison! But they *shall* find tongues, at least, if I can gain entrance there."

As I thus soliloquized, I stood before the low front of this sad residence. It was dreary and gloomy looking; every window protected by strong bars of iron; and an air of woful solitude breathing around it. The high trees and closely planted shrubs completely shut out the sunbeams, that were so brightly shining on all other parts of the garden. Nothing moved in this obscurity, but a lonely peacock, whose drooping plumage seemed affected by the shade he sauntered in, and suddenly, as if to *harmonize* with all around, and with the feelings I experienced, the bird opened out his throat, and sent forth screams of such sad discord, as might fitly wail the wrecks of reason and happiness within the walls they pierced through. The scene was overpowering; and I never felt more relief than when the dinner bell pealed out its voluble summons, and called me hastily away.

As I proceeded towards the house, a servant, in a gaudy livery, with a napkin in his hand, came to seek

for and conduct me to the refectory; and I was met at the door, which opened into the garden, by the doctor himself and two younger gentlemen, whom he presented to me as the assistant physicians of his establishment. One of these was a tall, sinister-looking, sallow-complexioned fellow, of about thirty-five; the other a dapper, fresh-coloured, dandyish youth, full ten years younger. Ushered into the dining-room, where I perceived a table laid for full forty persons, I took the place pointed out to me by the doctor at his right hand, and I found that my next neighbour was an excessively beautiful young woman, whom I had not observed among the loungers in the garden. Opposite to me sat the sallow-complexioned doctor, and next to him the fat lady. The rest of the large party were quickly seated; the housekeeper on an elevated chair exactly in the centre of one of the sides, with a huge tureen before her, a napkin carefully pinned up to the top of her tucker, and a large silver ladle in her hand, I saw that the operations of carving were meant to be executed particularly by her, in the way common to *table d'hôte* mistresses of the ceremonies.

The soup and the *bouilli* were served amidst a nearly general silence; and while the first course was placed upon the table I had leisure to observe the whole style of the entertainment. Nothing could be better appointed, as far as solid quantities of plate, and all the accessories of a dinner-service were concerned. The numerous dishes were brought to the door by the assistants of the *chef de cuisine*, or head cook, and received by Michel the porter, and three other men, all habited in rich but tasteless liveries, while a couple of neatly dressed women stood at as many side tables, prepared to carry off the plates, spoons, *et cetera*, as fast as they were used. When the whole service of *entremets*, *ragoûts*, and *fricassées* were served up, I observed the chief cook put his white capped head into the room, and after an enquiring look at what, for courtesy-sake, we will call the *arrangement* of the table, the aforesaid head shook a gracious nod of approbation, and disappeared. But *I* could not avoid being struck,

and was, in spite of myself, annoyed at the total absence of all order or method in the setting out of the many excellent things, and the wretched taste displayed in the management of such materials for a really handsome repast. The knives, forks, and spoons, glasses, bottles, plates, and dishes, were all huddled together at random, shewing no more regard than Lady Macbeth wished to see in her guests as to "the order of their going or *coming*." The dishes were of different dimensions, and dropped upon the table in any *dis*order that might happen. The most practised mathematician would have been puzzled to produce the simplest combination out of such a confusion of figures as presented itself. Every thing was at sixes and sevens; and the amazing inconsistency of French manners and habits again exemplified most fully.

Never did any horse in a mill labour more pertinaciously in its round of duty than did the indefatigable housekeeper in the monotonous exercise of hers. Every dish on the table was successively placed before her, and every person supplied by her hand. The rapidity, the skilfulness, the patience she displayed were all wonderful. Plate after plate was popped in under her left elbow by one expert attendant, and, after receiving its portion, passed out under her right arm into the hand of another, with a dexterity that might have raised a blush on the wrists of Whippee-Snippee, or Ram-Jam-Tossaway, the Indian jugglers. The accurate measurement of the housekeeper's eye was only equalled by her steadiness of hand. We were exactly thirty-six at table. Every individual dish, by which I mean the *contents* of each dish, were divided into thirty-six parts, with an equality on which might have been modelled an agrarian division of any thing, from a tract of swamp in the Illinois territory to the lumps of assafœtida meant for pills on an apothecary's counter. My anxiety was, at times, quite painful for the responsibility of the housekeeper's situation; as, for instance, when five stewed and larded pigeons came, in their turn, for dissection. "How the deuce," thought I—and I suspended for a minute or two my operations on the segment of a *fricandeau*, just big enough to give

shelter to the points of my fork, with about a dessert spoonful of the mashed sorrel which enveloped it, and which had come to me as my share—"how the deuce can she fairly partition those five pigeons? It would have bothered the spoliators of Poland!" But before I had time to attempt a calculation, the thing was done; and I had but a moment allowed me to swallow my tantalizing morsel of *fricandeau*, when my plate was snapped away, and another darted before me, with about the third part of a thigh, a head, and a piece of skin of one of the identical pigeons, for my portion, while the knife of the carver was merrily working away upon the fleshy jowl of a *tête de veau au naturel*, which was rapidly disappearing in atoms before her—and I verily believe she did not spill even one drop of gravy from first to last.

Thus the dinner went on, reversing every English notion of precedence; for the first service seemed to follow the second, and though the *rôti* certainly succeeded the *ragoût*, yet the fish superseded the flesh, the vegetables and sweet things came altogether alone by themselves, as we say in Ireland; and the dessert, including the cheese, brought up the rear-guard of the army of edibles, which, though served *en masse*, was annihilated in detail: not a scrap escaped—every bone was polished—every atom consumed! The quantity was really prodigious, the quality excellent; but I never made so bad a dinner. I had been uncommonly hungry, from the effects of several hours' walk, and I did ample justice to every little specimen set before me; but each was *so* diminutive, so tantalizing, so insufficient, that twenty times, during the meal, all my predilections for French cookery seemed to evaporate, and I heartily longed for a boiled leg of mutton, a round of beef, or an Irish stew. When all was over, I could not help acknowledging that, though still unsatisfied, I had had *enough*—but not of that kind, or in that way, which makes it "as good as a feast." There was but little wine drunk, and, I believe, I had more of *that* than came fairly to my share, thanks to its being out of the control of the housekeeper's apportionment. As for

her, poor devil, she did not eat or drink bit or sup; but no alderman, after a corporation feast, could have suffered more from *his* exertions. The curse of Adam was upon her brow most profusely: she panted for breath, and, with the aid of her napkin, succeeded (like her sex in general) in giving herself airs; while her olive-coloured cheeks and forehead gained a brighter hue from her labours, and she seemed to have *gilt* herself in proportion as she had *carved* for others.

But I had not been so completely occupied with observations on the *matériel* of the repast, or the operations of the chief actor, as to be wholly unobservant of the less prominent persons, or of the minor proceedings that were at work. I had my eye, at intervals, on every one of the party, and I was sometimes enabled, as all my readers have many a time been, to take an observation of several at once, and even to be sharply looking, with a ramification of vision, in a direction out of the line of my apparent view. The lady at my right hand was an object of particular attention: she was, as I have said, very beautiful, and her dress was in the most elegant and tasteful style of *négligé*. Her whole manner, in all the little management of knife and fork, and those other minutiæ of self-service, which are so eloquent as to the habits of the doer, convinced me that she was no common person. She had also an air of what appeared, at first, reserve, but which soon showed itself to be melancholy, that began by commanding my respect, and ended by exciting my compassion. I made several attempts to lead her into conversation; but she did not even give me a reply—a silent inclination of the head gave either assent or refusal to my offers of service or my efforts at discourse; and, more frequently than either, she showed a total inattention to what I said, and looked on the table with eyes that seemed fixed upon some object distant beyond all measurement.

From time to time I looked at the others, but saw nothing half as remarkable as I expected to find. There is something so universally levelling in the act of eating—appetite is such a polisher of the differences that distinguish mortals from each other—that even the

freaks of insanity are merged in the universal instinct which sets the jaws a-working, and all the developments of brain are for a while suspended, to give the palate uninterrupted play. I suppose it was from this cause that I saw so little extraordinary in the bearing of the mad folk at table. Perhaps the lynx-eyed observation of the doctor had its effect in suppressing any incipient inclination to pass the bounds of strict and common-place propriety, if such for a moment rose up in the fancies of the convalescents. As it was, I might certainly have gone through the whole repast without seeing any thing beyond the dull decorum of good sense, and have got up from table supposing its duties to have entirely absorbed the whole party, had not a little *mistake* on the part of an individual mischievously whispered me that there might be much going on under the table-cloth which was unknown even to the table it covered.

Very soon after the soup had been removed, and the house-keeper's operations had commenced in solid earnest, and while I was in the act of addressing a sentence of civility to the interesting girl beside me, I felt something gently touch the point of one of my feet with a very light pressure. I did not pay any attention to it at first, and on a repetition of the touch, I concluded that a cat was passing to and fro under the table. After a very short interval, however, it came again, and there was something so intelligible in the feel of the thing and in the language it spoke, that I thought *mere* animal agency could not alone have caused it. The fact of the case came across my mind with a quickness and clearness that showed, as I thought, a considerable aptitude on my part: I was convinced in a moment that the sallow-visaged doctor was sending his long legs on an embassy from the other side of the table, and that his grisly foot believed itself in the act of making a very tender impression on the instep of my beautiful neighbour. My determination was instantly formed to encourage the doctor's error, to personate, with the point of my foot, the moiety of one of those no-doubt delicate ones for which it was mistaken, and

to amuse myself by observing those secret workings of the doctor's *sole*, which, I thought, if properly managed by me, would be likely to display themselves in his countenance.

In pursuance of this freak, the consequences of which I little foresaw, as my readers will believe when they learn them, I quietly slipped my foot out of its shoe, the better to counterfeit feminine delicacy; and advancing it softly towards that of the doctor, which had retreated after his last attempt, I gently touched the tip of his great toe with mine. While I did so, I turned again towards the lady on whom I was committing this personal forgery, and though saying a few words to her, I marked, by a single glance, the effect of my first step in this under-foot affair. The doctor's look had been lowering and disappointed, at the little sympathy excited by *his* first pressure; but no sooner did he feel the timid touch which I essayed, than a frightful expression of delight showed itself on his face. An odious streakiness overspread his cheeks, the livid veins of his temples swelled almost to bursting, his lip quivered with a convulsive tremor, and his glowering eyes seemed to float in bile. The look of sickening softness which he rolled across the table, was enough to infect the delicate things it passed over, like the poison blast that desolates the gardens of Araby.

I was utterly disgusted with the fellow, but I did not the less amuse myself with him. For full half an hour I played him, as an angler plays a salmon, forward and backward, from one side to the other; sometimes luring him on, then letting him retreat; now suffering his foot gently to press mine, then giving his a squeeze on the most sensitive and corny part, and on these occasions I could mark on his lips the anguish which he was, martyr-like, enduring so bravely. At last I got quite tired of my sport, and began to hate the wretch, as his glances at the passive object of his gallantries seemed to give her credit for a sympathy with his overtures of which she was wholly innocent. He at last looked so atrociously amorous, that I could keep my temper no longer, but slipping my foot again into

my shoe, I waited for his next approach; and drawing back my leg an instant, to take forcible aim, I darted it forward with amazing accuracy, and just caught his advancing shin-bone on the edge of my square-toed shoe. The pain he suffered must have been intolerable, for he smacked his knee against the table with a force that caused it to dart up like a spring-board, and made a *matelotte* of eels, which was beside him, bound, as though they had just been popped into the frying-pan. Several bottles and glasses were upset and broken, and the whole of the sensitive assemblage looked affrighted. The victim of my vengeance writhed with pain, and I, with all the hypocrisy I could put on, looked penitence personified, and apologized, expressing my fears that I had kicked *him*, instead of a dog or cat, which I supposed to have been at my foot. "I beg a thousand pardons," said I, in conclusion.

"*Au contraire, Monsieur, c'est moi,*" exclaimed he, bowing down to the table-cloth, with perfect politeness, and I was quite satisfied. But if I was, or even *gratified* with his discomfiture and suffering, the feeling was soon changed to one of a very different kind. No sooner were the staring eyes of the party taken off his face, which I, however, continued slyly to observe, than I perceived him to dart one look at my lovely neighbour, of such a mixed and horrible kind, that I felt myself bodily to shrink from it. He either meant to reproach her for her insensibility to his suffering, of which she knew nothing, or for a complicity in the injury done him—Heaven knows what! But so deadly a look of anger, hatred and revenge, I certainly never witnessed. During the remainder of the repast he sat sullen and silent. The dinner was in due time finished; the party rose from table; and while coffee was preparing to be served in another room, every body went out to walk in the garden.

CHAPTER III.

THE principal doctor, with persecuting politeness, was most assiduous in his attentions to me during the after-dinner promenade. He seemed to have ransacked the whole stores of his memory, since morning, for a collection of terms the most abstruse, and words the most jaw-breaking, in the whole range of science and lexicography. He opened out a battery upon me of subjects of every *calibre*, from the predicaments of Aristotle to Newton's Principia; and he was deep in the substance of a Treatise (which he meant to publish, or had published, I forget which) in refutation of Sir Isaac's doctrine of the tides, when sudden screams from the garden-house, near to which we were walking, caused him to dart off like a shooting star, and I soon saw his dandy assistant running in the same direction. The various groups which had been lounging about, under the superintendance of this young doctor, quickly dispersed, and with affrighted looks they all ran to the shelter of the larger building, as if the sounds from *the other* reminded them of what had before been, and might again be, their own fate.

My attention was wholly given to the screams which were piercingly sent forth. They were from a female voice, of the most harrowing tone. My imagination instantly pictured the form of my lovely neighbour at the dinner table, writhing under the correction of the bilious villain, whose infernal look seemed still to dance before my eyes, and to turn every thing yellow. This was the natural effect of association rather than reasoning; but the impulse it gave me led me in the direction of the place which all the others, save the doctors, fled from. As I got nearer to the dismal dwelling the sounds died away, or rather came in a gurgling murmur, like the obstructed voice of a forest stream.

"Do you hear that?" asked somebody, from behind a mass of shrubs. "They are now forcing the gag into her mouth—choking her, perhaps. But the prime minister—"

At once startled and shocked by the sound and the *sense* of the fat lady's announcement, I sprang away towards the scene of cruelty, and had reached the house, and was rushing to the door, when Michel, who stood before it, stepped forward, and putting his hand against my breast, said, in a tone of insolent firmness,

"You must not enter here, Sir."

"Let me pass, ruffian!" exclaimed I; and I was endeavouring to force my way, when the appearance of the very man I seemed to seek, made me stop suddenly, and caused me to shrink back with a shudder of detestation. It was the sallow doctor who came from the house, attracted by the angry voices of myself and the sturdy scoundrel, who gave me back quite as much abuse as I lavished on him, and struggled with all his might against my efforts for entrance. Alarm was the most evident symptom on the doctor's pale face, but it bore plain tokens of still greater agitation than could be caused by my words, high sounding as they were. His cheeks were the colour of a faded lemon, with livid and mouldy spots here and there; and in two or three places the marks of nails had furrowed them, and left traces in which there should have been blood, had not the wretch's coward heart sucked his veins dry. His cravat was torn; and a good deal of dishevelment in his dress altogether, told me quite enough to convince me that my imagination had not exceeded the bounds of fact.

"What, in God's name, is the matter? Who talks of the police?" asked he, tremblingly.

"I do!" said I, recovering myself; "and if I am refused entrance here, I will call in the aid of some power able to save the victims inside."

"Oh, is that it?" replied the sneaking wretch, with a smile that reversed every notion of what a smile ought to convey. "Is that the cause of all this tumult? If you take my advice, Sir, you will retire, and not disturb the tranquillity of this place, nor interrupt the duties of *patented* physicians in the care of their patients."

"Tranquillity! patented! care!" echoed I, and I

was about to utter something more original, and not less striking, when the chief doctor himself, the Corypheus of the junta of *patented* tyranny, made his appearance. He seemed taken rather by surprise; but he shewed more tact than the ruffled subaltern he was leagued with.

"My good Sir," said he, addressing me with overacted civility, "what is the matter? Are you unwell? has any thing unpleasant occurred, that I may rectify?"

"That you know best, Sir," answered I. "I shall rather ask you these questions. I wish to know what has happened, and the cause of the dreadful sounds which have alarmed your whole establishment?"

"*Alarmed* them! not a bit, my dear Sir. You deceive yourself. They are all too well accustomed to these things. Come, come, let us walk this way, and I will tell you all about it."

With these words he took me familiarly by the arm, and was about walking me off; but I shook myself from his hold, and protested against stirring from the spot until he explained what had happened. Thus pressed, and not wishing to let an example of insubordination get wind, he turned to me again with great address, and continued—

"To be sure, my very good Sir; to be sure; I am too happy to explain any thing to you which may cause you any surprise. I value too much the good luck which has given me the happiness of your society, to let our good understanding be impaired by refusing, as I peremptorily might, this explanation, which you have no earthly right to demand."

"Pardon me, Sir," said I, warmly, "as a man, in common humanity, I am entitled to ask it."

"Well, well, granted, if you will have it so," rejoined he; "but as a physician, at my discretion, I may, if I choose, refuse it."

"Yes, but—"

"Let's not argue about it," continued he, with forced suavity—"I have the best of the *argument* on my side, depend on it—but you shall know this mighty secret. One of our refractory patients (and we have enough,

God help us!) required some correction, and has received it from my worthy friend here, that's all!"

"It was the lady who sat beside me at dinner?" asked I, abruptly.

"How do you know that?"

"You are right, it was," said the doctors simultaneously, the guilt-stricken assistant being rather earlier with his question, than the chief with his answer.

"Good God!" exclaimed I, "is it really possible that *violence* could have been required with that suffering creature, who seemed bowed down with melancholy?"

"My dear Sir, there is at times a crisis in the peculiar complaint from which that young person suffers, that causes the most frightful transitions. Such has just taken place. This gentleman has the especial charge of the poor creature. Look at his face—see the evidence it bears of the girl's frenzy."

"Poor thing!" uttered I, involuntarily: but the sallow visaged wretch took the exclamation to *himself*, and in the warmth of his gratitude for my supposed sympathy, he was beginning to explain more than he was called upon to do.

"Lord, Sir, this is nothing to what I have suffered from that spiteful vixen at times."

"Was there no cause for this outrage?" asked I.

"Not the least, Sir. When I attempted to feel her pulse quite gently, as she was lying down on her bed after dinner—"

"Pray," said I—maliciously, I confess—"pray, does the pulse of melancholy madness lie in the instep?"

But I rather repented my jocoseness, bitter as it was; for the two doctors sent me forth two looks, of very different kinds, but equally evil-boding, as far as I could read their meaning. The elder practitioner, always on the watch for symptoms of *irrationality* in every one he talked to, evidently thought my question of a very dubious nature as an indication of my actual right-mindedness. The yellow fellow at once divined my allusion to his conduct—he blushed a tawny blush, knit his dark brows into a frown that it appeared impossible

to unravel again, gave me a look the very counterpart of that which had so shocked me at dinner-table, and then abruptly turned away without more words.

The chief doctor, with a medicinal solicitude and an eager attention, begged me to explain what I meant by my extraordinary question. Wishing not to get further entangled in his inquiries, or in the enmity of the assistant, I answered him very briefly, and in a way to put his surmises to rest, by making him sure of my meaning.

"Your friend understands me perfectly, doctor," replied I—"my question was meant for him; and should you be curious as to its meaning, he can explain it if he chooses: but let it pass for the present—it is of very minor importance to the subject which led to all this conversation. *That*, I confess, interests me deeply; and without wishing to meddle in the delicacies of your professional practice, I hope I may be allowed to solicit your own immediate interference in the management of the unfortunate young person with whom your assistant is in too close contact. I have good reason for what I say, and he knows it."

The doctor paused for a few minutes, and then said—

"I have been thinking of what you just uttered. I will not affect to misunderstand you; but I can form no opinion on your hints: nor can I personally interfere, as you would wish me, in the actual details of this lady's treatment. As chief of this establishment I have a right to a general superintendance over all the patients it contains; but you cannot, my dear Sir, have to learn that, in our profession, there is the most scrupulous delicacy to be paid to the etiquette of practice."

"I know that many a precious life has been forfeited to it," replied I.

"Partial evil must be endured to secure the general good," answered he, in a pompous tone. I had no wish for a discussion on his common-place ethics; so I did not let any observation of mine fill up the pause which he left open for me; and he, seeing there was no chance of an argument, and no excuse for a dissertation,

let the subject drop. Reverting to the more particular theme of our discourse, he continued—

"You thus see it is impossible for me to scrutinize too minutely the particulars of this case."

"What," said I, "if I can establish good grounds for your suspicion that this assistant of yours is pursuing a very different *treatment* of this helpless young lady from what duty, or delicacy, or decency commands?"

"Hush, hush, my good Sir; not so loud, if you please: the convalescents walk about the gardens quite at their liberty."

"There is not much fear, doctor, of their venturing into *this* neighbourhood."

"Well, well, Sir," cried he impatiently, and somewhat ill-temperedly, "we really must not moot those points at present: I must request, and, indeed, insist that the discipline which I see it good to establish here, which the laws of my country allow, and which the authorities recognize, may not be disturbed, nor my courtesy abused—"

"Softly, softly, my good doctor," said I, interrupting him, and, falconer like, seeking to bring back my bird to his allure; "you are giving yourself useless trouble, and throwing away your words. If you would stifle all inquiry or repress every suggestion on my part, I have no objection to quit your house altogether, and try if the authorities you speak of will be as indifferent as you are to my suspicions of the infamous conduct—"

"For Heaven's sake, Sir, speak lower—you are really very imprudent. Pray walk with me, calmly and coolly, into my study, and we can talk over this affair: not another word in the open air, I beg of you!"

The ill-concealed perturbation of my companion convinced me I had taken the right tone with him; and believing that, through the medium of his fears, I might find means to work out some good to the unfortunate victims of the system going on around me, I determined to make a temporary compromise, and I accordingly accompanied him to the house. As we crossed the garden, I observed the fat lady, evidently on the watch for me, and making various signs of invitation to another

conference. I took no notice of this, for fear of attracting the doctor's keen-sightedness, and turning his anger into the current of impunity on which the fat lady seemed floating; but, to give his attention another object, I pointed to an old woman whom one of the servants was exercising in a garden-chair, the rudder-wheel of which the decrepit invalid was not even able to direct. Had not more stirring subjects occupied my mind, I would have stopped to examine and compassionate the poor old creature. She seemed in the very last stage of existence, and presented a most humiliating example of mortal imbecility. I made a remark to that effect to the doctor, as we passed by her.

"Yes, Sir," said he, with an indifferent air, "she is all but buried—the flame is in the socket—it would be mercy to put an extinguisher on it."

I had no time then to reason on this expression of the doctor's *humanity*, but it came to my mind with great force afterwards.

We sat together in the doctor's study for full an hour. As he had a voluble tongue, a clear head, and good memory, it may be imagined what a fund of information he had it in his power to give me during our conference; and I must allow that he did not misapply his time, nor "husband his resources." He entered, with an apparent frankness, into the subjects of my inquiry, which convinced me that he was either conscious of his rectitude, anxious to keep a show of openness, or very fond of the music of his own voice—the three readiest causes for garrulity in those who are not far advanced in years or deeply immersed in love: yet I confess myself to have been, at the time, puzzled as to the chief reason for the doctor's fluent communications, for he possessed such a fund of *finesse* and tact as quite to baffle me; and, after all, while apparently talking to me in the utmost confidence, he told me nothing that I might not have learned from the fat lady, except, perhaps, one or two unimportant particulars relative to her, which I should not have gathered from herself.

The subject matter of our conversation related entirely to the various individuals whom I have cursorily

introduced to the reader. Wishing to lead the doctor gradually on to the person in whose fate I felt the strongest interest, from having, as it were, unintentionally become involved in it, I began my inquiries with those whose situation excited a comparatively trifling regard: but before we touched upon any of those persons even, the doctor candidly avowed to me the absolute nature of his house, which the reader knows already; and he launched forth into a ready-cut-and-dry detail of its preeminent advantages over all others of the kind, and of his own peculiar superexcellence, beyond all other practitioners, in diseases of the mind, which might have been, and, I dare say, has been, printed over and over again, as the prospectus of every receptacle of the like nature existing.

Having thus established a sort of right to my personal inquiries, I began by some relating to the fat lady; and of her I learned that she was a simple, unoffending soul, whose madness was her inheritance, her father having died in the frightful way she had told me; but he had previously cut off the chief entail, as I may call it, of his complaint, leaving his daughter only *foolish* instead of *frantic*. She had gone on harmlessly through life, from childhood to her then age of forty, or thereabouts, supported by a pension from the government, which had been regularly paid through all the consular, imperial, and monarchical changes; and as she had the privilege of an unlimited run of the house and grounds, and fancied herself in direct correspondence with the prime minister for the time being, she was, the doctor assured me, much happier than many of sounder minds, and more rational than many with less vacant countenances.

We next talked of the old priest, of whom the doctor had so savagely spoken to the porter, and the fat lady so feelingly to me. Of him the doctor professed to have but little to say, but that his head was turned, in consequence of his receiving an autograph communication on some theological work from his Holiness the Pope, which ended in his fancying that he was "himself the Great Sublime"—and on his bishop placing him under

the doctor's tender care, he was preposterous enough to imagine the garden-house St. Peter's Cathedral; and was, when he had not to complain of the quality of his dinner, (particularly on *maigre* days) more enviably placed, the doctor thought, than if he wore the tiara, and had the half of Europe delighted to kiss the tip of his toe.

Of young Vincent de Bouverie the doctor spoke with overacted sensibility; lamenting that so fine a youth should have been deprived of all "discourse of reason," and with it the possession of the half of his father's vast fortune, now destined entirely for his younger brother, who did not oppose his own inclinations to his parents' authority. But the most lamentable thing, according to the doctor's notion, was that amorous propensity which led this unfortunate Vincent to make love to every woman that came in his way, which had first developed itself in a desperate attachment to one of his mother's maids; and was, in spite of every means to keep his blood cool, again bursting forth in relation to the countess.

Of the countess the doctor either could not, or would not, tell me any thing, beyond her being a widow, and placed under the restrictions of his discipline to prevent her marrying a second time, and thus getting cured of her immoderate grief for her husband, and depriving his surviving brothers of the large possessions which would be theirs, or their children's, at her death. "And fortunate it will be for her, poor dear lady," said the doctor, "should we succeed in keeping up that salutary state of despondency, which will save her from the rocks of matrimony, on which she has been once already split!"

"But the sweet girl," said I, "who sat beside me at table, and towards whom your assistant is, trust me, pursuing a most foul course of conduct? What of her? Who is she, doctor? and what is the cause of that deep melancholy which so totally possesses her? I have never seen a lovelier or more truly interesting being—tell me, then, who she is, and why she is here. No cause of a common nature could have an influence, I think, on

the mind that should be joined with a face of such intelligence. Pray tell me all of her that you may, in candour and fairness, communicate to a stranger. You may take the interest she has excited in me, as the guaranty for my discretion."

"Well, then, listen patiently," replied the doctor, "and you shall learn all that I know about her."

CHAPTER IV.

From the doctor's disclosures, and from what I acquired afterwards on still better authority, I am enabled to state the causes which led to the deplorable situation in which I found the unfortunate young lady; and I prefer condensing the details, in my own way, to giving them as they were recounted to me, in the prolixity and diffuseness of oral communications.

She, to whose name I cannot give publicity, was the child of parents of high rank, large fortune, and great consideration in the country. She was a younger daughter; and, according to the system of interested barbarism fast reviving in France, she was destined for a convent, that her elder sister might have the better chance of making a splendid marriage, with the increased portion gained by the sacrifice, and freed from the danger of rivalry with the bewitching beauty of the victim.

The privations and restrictions of a convent did not, however, suit the temperament of her who possessed too much of the feelings, or, perhaps, the *failings*, of mortality, to be satisfied with a seclusion from all the enjoyments of this world, for the questionable advantages promised to be secured by it in the next. She went through a couple of years of noviciate trial, with exemplary patience, and a strict observance of all those rules which were revolting to her notions of what was right, and her feelings of what was agreeable. She made great progress in the finishing acquirements of her education; and, on her finally declining to take the vows, she came

back to her father's house, at nineteen years of age, in pursuance of the compact made with her when she had quitted it, to essay the probation stipulated for the destined victims of the church. Her parents now discovered that the only way left for her disposal was the usual one of getting her married; and they could not avoid introducing her to the brilliant circle of society in which they mixed. Launched into the vortex of Parisian life, "the refractory novice," as she was familiarly called among her friends, excited great admiration, and not a little curiosity. She possessed a frank disposition, a high spirit, and unbounded gaiety. She received the exaggerated devotions of half the young men of fashion in Paris, but was as little affected by their "lip service" as the idol figure of a saint in its shrine.

At length, however, her *insensibility*, as it was commonly called, was destined to suffer a powerful change; and all the feelings of the heart, which had so long lain dormant, were awakened. A young Englishman, with whom she became acquainted by chance, performed the miracle which was thought beyond the power of mortal man, *because* a dozen of her own countrymen had attempted it in vain. The flinty heart of "the refractory novice" was struck, in the right way, and a fountain of passionate feeling gushed from it at the touch.

The particulars of the courtship I did not learn; nor can I enter into the circumstances attendant on an attachment to which the family and friends of both parties were violently opposed. The novice was not a girl of the usual yielding character of French daughters. She presumed to think for herself, and she refused submission to her parents' commands, when they bid her abandon her lover, and she *could* not obey them when they ordered her to forget him. He, in his turn, spurned every attempt at opposition on the part of his family, whose principles or prejudices were strongly opposed to his marrying a French woman and a Catholic. The usual means were resorted to, on both sides, to tear up the attachment by the roots. The lover was refused supplies—his mistress was removed

far from Paris, into the neighbourhood of the place where I met her, and near to which her father's possessions lay. But lovers never fail in expedients for the means of following their mistresses, and the latter can always find opportunities for meeting. Stolen interviews took place accordingly. Discovery, separation, and increased seclusion were the consequence. The influence of the parents caused the lover to be put under the *surveillance* of the police, and a domestic guardianship, full as strict, was adopted towards the refractory girl.

Obstacles almost insurmountable were thus thrown in the way of the lovers; and the natural channel for the vent of their feelings being stopped, they turned inward upon them with consuming force, and, like a stream dammed up until its waters become stagnant, they poisoned the soil they should have fertilized. It was then that dank vapours rose upwards to the brain of the unfortunate girl, and her mind became tainted with their noxious influence. The sudden revulsion from high spirits to despondency, from the gaieties of the world to the solitude of domestic retirement, from the sunbright visions of hope to the gloom of despair, produced the natural effects upon the whole nervous system, and a state of high excitement was followed by a total relaxation. The tone of her mind seemed utterly destroyed; yet no symptom beyond what are considered within the limits of *nervous affections* had appeared. Physicians were consulted; and, as usual, they differed in their opinions. Some, the harsh old bachelors, recommended constraint. Others, considerate fathers, advised indulgence. One, a tender-hearted young practitioner, wrote "marriage" for his prescription—and thus proved the sympathy between good feeling and good sense. But his advice was spurned, and himself dismissed; and a consultation with *my* doctor decided on, as the only chance of relief left for the tormented patient.

This doctor of mine, or of *ours*, if my readers will acknowledge the acquaintance, had very considerable provincial reputation. It was of course to be supposed

that, with a due sense of his professional dignity, he would differ from all his brethren. And, as the keeper of a *Maison de Santé*, nothing less could be expected from him than an urgent recommendation to have her, who so suffered from the misconceptions of the rest of the tribe, removed at once to his house, to have the full benefit of his management. The father and mother, kindly disposed towards their child, and only outrageous at her flagrant violation of propriety and obedience in presuming to have a choice of her own, gladly adopted the doctor's advice. His house had a high character for decorum, and he himself the highest possible reputation for skill and humanity. The father and mother, resolved to see with their own eyes, (that not over-common means of acquiring knowledge,) paid a visit to the doctor in his establishment; and he, as was usual in such visits of *reconnoissance*, took care to have every thing in the most *imposing* order. Every disagreeable object was removed, including the old woman in the garden-chair, the fat lady, and all others that could, by word or look, make an unfavourable impression as to the doctor's place of practice. The premises breathed the very atmosphere of tranquillity, and the doctor took care that the anxious father and mother should not approach within sight of the garden-house. In fact, they were delighted with the appearance of things, and not less with the manners of the medical firm. The sallow doctor, who was introduced as the gentleman who would have the especial care of the young invalid, quite won the mother's heart by his gentle and insinuating speeches; and it was decided that the nervous girl should be at once removed to the "house of health."

She readily consented to this plan, for a gleam of hope revived in her heart, at the very change of situation; and when she saw the place allotted for her new residence, she was quite rejoiced. Its whole aspect was in unison with her feelings, and the kind and conciliating manners of the doctors gave her hope of making, by their means, her situation known to her lover. Under these flattering and deceptious expectations, she entered the *Maison de Santé*—but a short time sufficed

to show her how she had cheated herself. She quickly perceived that she was surrounded by the insane, and in the power of the wicked; that her symptoms were aggravated by violence, and her senses actually in danger from the infection of those she mixed with. And, by degrees, new and more serious causes of disquiet assailed her. The scenes of cruelty acted around her could not be long concealed. The muttered imprecations of the sufferers reached her ears; and she could not shut her eyes on the looks and gestures of the tyrants. She soon herself became enrolled among the victims. Her sallow-visaged attendant marked her as *his* prey—and, whether by silent consent, or avowed compact, the chief physician permitted his designs, by not interfering with them; and thus negatively countenanced what he turned his face from.

By what measures the reprobate first assailed the object of his fiendish passion it is hard to say, although we may suppose them; but no ghost has yet spoken from the prison-house. That this disgrace at once to medicine and manhood did, however, avail himself of the opportunities afforded by the trust reposed in him, is too true; and the evidence of my instep is not wanting to convict him of a course of vile attempts upon the delicate creature committed to his charge. These facts transpired afterwards; but at the time I arrived on the scene of his iniquitous doings, the result of his conduct upon his victim had been such as utterly to change her from what she had once been, to plunge her into a state of hopeless melancholy, to break her spirit, and destroy her health; but he had never been able to conquer her aversion nor subdue her virtue. Under all these harsh inflictions of his temper, and the savage out-burstings of his odious passion, she rallied the little that was left her of physical and mental strength, and repulse after repulse drove the wretch to that crisis of brute desperation, ending in the treatment which caused the alarm that led to my interference.

Having thus informed my readers as much of previous circumstances as were necessary to excite their interest for the chief subject of my own, I must say a

few words relative to the young Englishman, whose fate was, not merely metaphorically, but actually and most fatally, bound up with hers. This young man, ardent, thoughtless, and impetuous, had rushed head-long into the passion which, like an irresistible torrent, bore him along. He possessed no means, such as I have heard it asserted are of easy acquirement, to stem the tide of feeling; at least he put forth no opposing efforts, but resigned himself willingly to his fate, and was satisfied that he better ensured his happiness by the indulgence of his attachment than he could have done by all the triumph of subduing it. His pride, too, was roused by opposition: he thought that his parents, as well as hers, acted at once cruelly and contemptibly, and he was resolved that it should not be his fault if they succeeded in separating two beings for ever, whom they could not for one moment alienate. He swore not to abandon the object of his affection, but to use every means of seeing her, and of obtaining her, though he should lose his life in the attempt. We shall see whether or not this vow was "false as dicer's oaths."

After the last separation, which I before alluded to, and which had only increased the determination of the lovers to meet again, if possible, the young Englishman was long baffled in his endeavours to obtain a clue as to the place of his mistress's concealment. His temperament could ill brook the agitations of suspense, which no exertions of his own seemed capable of removing. Every application to the family and kindred of his beloved one was treated with scorn: bribery was ineffectual with the servants, and the strict watchfulness of the police totally thwarted all his personal efforts to obtain information. He also found difficulty in raising money in a foreign country, and without that, the main-spring of human conduct—self-interest, was not within his power of purchase; and the manifold anxieties which beset him, almost drove him to despair. The gaming table was the remedy sure to be tried by a man like the one I am now treating of; and such a man, in such a mood, was as sure to become a dupe as he became a gambler. He soon lost all he could command in the shape of

money or securities, and, having *no* command over himself, he was quickly rushing on to more than one kind of ruin.

At this juncture, a specious villain, one of the rejected suitors of her for whom he was thus suffering, threw himself in the way of the unhappy lover, as if by chance, but pursuant to a deep and base design. This man, leagued with some members of her family who favoured his suit, and who, like himself, were ready to go to the greatest lengths (provided the means were safe) to get rid of the favoured rival, had resolved to lure him on, by gradual steps, to such a state of mental wretchedness as would lead him to some act that might, *at least*, procure his removal from the country altogether. With this object, the false friend in question came across him at one of his moments of frantic wretchedness, and by all the insidious manœuvring of treachery, he wormed himself into the unsuspecting lover's confidence. He represented himself, after a while, as actuated but by warm wishes for her happiness whose heart he had once aspired to, and he professed the utmost zeal in his desire to forward the means by which he believed that happiness would be secured. The lover, at once flattered by this, and almost bewildered by the apparent good fortune which had raised up this generous friend in his distress, soon threw himself wholly into the snare so skilfully prepared for him, and gave himself up implicitly to the guidance that seemed leading him to certain happiness. His false friend, having now got him completely into his power, took care to manage him for his purposes. He kept up his state of irritating uncertainty—at one time setting him nearly desperate from disappointment, at another rendering him nearly wild with joy; now holding up his mistress to his view, as it were, and easily within his reach; and again representing her as lost to him for ever. Violent paroxysms of opposite feelings seemed to make the unfortunate victim their sport; and in a little while his state of mind was such as to give a fair colour to almost any representation which might be made of its irregularity.

Having so far succeeded in his designs, it was with apparent justice and propriety that this man called the attention of the police to the situation of the unfortunate young Englishman. He professed himself to be his friend, and in that character he required the countenance of the authorities to those measures of safety which he felt it necessary to take in behalf of the unhappy foreigner. His request appeared so reasonable that it was easily granted, and the strict *surveillance* which might have saved its object from greater evil being removed, the false friend had a wide discretion allowed him in the management of his victim. He had acquired immense influence over him, and readily obtained his assent to every movement he proposed, but to none more joyfully than that which was urged in consequence of the pretended discovery of the long-sought retreat of her for whom alone he lived. The identical *Maison de Santé* (where she was indeed too securely lodged), was pointed out to the delighted lover as the bourne of all his anxieties. *There* he was assured she was, and to gain admission there was the immediate object of his impetuous determination.

How to effect this object appeared somewhat difficult to the lover, for it was to be expected that the family of his mistress would take every precaution to exclude the possibility of his approach: but his ready friend obviated all difficulty by proposing that he should feign illness of that nature that made the *Maison de Santé* a peculiarly desirable retreat; and a footing once obtained, the rest was to depend on himself. He eagerly adopted this plan, and it so happened that the very day of my arrival at the place was that of his application, attended by his confidant, to be received into the establishment as a patient labouring under occasional nervous derangement, and requiring just such mild and temperate treatment—as (even had his complaint been real) he would have been sure not to meet there.

I little imagined, as the doctor was interrupted in the middle of our evening conference, by Michel's announcement of the arrival of two gentlemen requiring accommodations—that one of these was the person re-

lative to whom he had been giving me the partial details to which I was afterwards enabled to add, and whose very existence was involved in the fate of her whose pitiable situation filled at the time my whole thoughts. Whether or not the doctor knew the persons that waited for him, or if he were a party to the iniquitous proceedings in such desperate and frightful progress, I know not. He, however, rather abruptly left me to attend the summons; and I once more strolled out into the garden, to turn over in my mind the information I had acquired, and to cogitate on the best course for my conduct, in the somewhat delicate situation in which I was placed.

The first person I saw was the fat lady, who seemed to await my approach with a countenance big with mystery. Her face was at the full, and shone on me most pregnantly. But I no longer enjoyed her flights. My mind was occupied with more serious thoughts than she could inspire; and I would have altogether avoided her, had I not thought it well to keep on good terms with so communicative an ally, whose services might be useful in furtherance of the plans I began to form.

The sun was just setting, and seemed sinking into the liquid bed of a broad lake, that bounded the view from an elevated terrace at the end of the garden. I looked through its lofty balustrade, upon the luxuriant richness of the plain below me; and the calm breath of evening awoke a thousand odours from the orange trees and myrtles, and the profusion of southern shrubs which adorned the gardens. At one end of the terrace, a man of most cadaverous aspect, with long matted beard, and meanly dressed, paced backwards and forwards with hurried movement; his eyes cast down, his lips closely compressed together, and his air abstracted and morose. At the other extremity of this promenade, a well dressed woman, in white muslin robes, and all the other appliances of her costume corresponding, was on her knees, in the attitude of prayer. She looked on the setting sun, undazzled by the splendours of his golden disk, as if her eyes received strength from the spirit of adoration which prompted her gaze. Her gestures were

more impassioned than devout, and gave her an air of still greater enthusiasm than one attaches to even the warmth of religious feeling. Had it not been for that, she would have embodied all that might be imagined of a Peruvian priestess at her fervid rites, or some matron fire-worshipper in the exercise of oriental devotion.

"Who are these new characters?" asked I of my fat follower, who had walked quickly after me, and was now by my side.

"That poor man yonder," replied she, "was one of the wealthiest stockbrokers of Paris; but at length totally ruined by some speculation or other, he lost his wits, poor creature!—and he now fancies himself the wandering Jew, condemned to a penance of total silence for a thousand years. He never speaks—"

"And she?" interrupted I.

"Oh! the wife of the Sun? Don't you know her? Lord, Sir, she has been married to him these two years, and now that he has gone to bed, you see she is walking off to hers. Winter and summer she is faithful to his motions—away she goes, you see."

The harmless and happy bride did actually retreat at those words, wrapping herself closely round in her white scarf; and the fat lady, looking after her with a protecting air, exclaimed—

"Poor misguided thing! What a sin to keep you in this wretched place! But never mind," continued she, turning briskly towards me again,—"never mind! I will have her removed from this—I will write to the—"

"Prime minister," said I; "is it not so?"

"Pray, how did you come to know that I knew him?" exclaimed she, in much surprise.

"A little bird told me so," answered I, with a tone of deep gravity, which I was certain would put her to flight.

"Indeed, Sir? Good evening to you; good evening, Sir; I wish you a very good evening; good evening—Sir;—good—even—" murmured she, as she rapidly curtesied herself off the terrace, and disappeared into one of the alleys.

By this time, thought I, the doctor may be at leisure again. I cannot now attend to these fresh specimens of insanity—I must be at my post!

CHAPTER V.

As I approached the house again, I observed the chief doctor, standing in conversation with two gentlemen near the door of entrance. One of these, a robust, well-dressed Frenchman, verging towards middle-agedness, seemed to pay very earnest attention to the doctor's didactic holding-forth, while he, nevertheless, kept a keen glance of observation upon the movements of his companion, whose eyes appeared to examine with eager scrutiny every window of the house, and every flower of the garden. This latter individual I saw at once to be an Englishman; and he had that peculiar air of easy elegance—that medium between the spurious swaggering of vulgarity and the starched disdain of dandyism—which so completely marks the gentleman of true breeding in all countries. His dress was negligent, but highly fashionable; he looked under five-and-twenty years of age; and was particularly handsome. His face possessed an air of much intelligence, which seemed excited to intensity as he threw his eyes from object to object; and seemed to penetrate into each with inquiring gaze. His animated countenance and manly form were redolent of health and vigour; and a look of confidence and courage seemed to mark him as fit for enterprise and suited for success. I saw that there was some strong excitement working in this fine young fellow; but not wishing to intrude myself into the secrets of himself and his friend, and having a subject of more interest to occupy my attention, I turned away, and walked in the direction of the garden-house.

I hoped, and yet dreaded, to hear some sounds that might intimate the situation of the unfortunate young

lady. I approached the walls of the place of woe; but all was still and silent, save the feeble voice of an old person, chanting in faint discord one of the Latin psalms used in the service of the Church of Rome. I listened with attention to the frequent repetition of one line, which seemed uttered with pious delight. It was

"Hic habitabo, quoniam elegi eam."

I could not help feeling how enviable was the aged priest, in the satisfied enjoyment of his dignities, and throned in the chosen splendours of his imaginary temple, compared with the hapless being, whose youth and beauty were the fatal causes of her miseries, and in whom reason still held its seat with cruel tenacity. "It were better to be mad outright," thought I, "than doomed to the consciousness which she must endure." And scarcely did the thought flit through my brain, when my eye caught the countenance of the sallow fiend, glancing in odious contrast through the leaves of an olive tree, as he paced a neighbouring alley in the direction of the large house. I followed him with fascinated gaze, and saw him enter a little porch in one of the low wings which flanked the house. He slided in stealthily, with a side glance thrown at the two strangers, who were walking arm in arm.

The elder man seemed, with persuasive energy, to repress the other's impetuosity, which was evinced in his fiery glances and rapid gesticulation. The chief doctor spoke apart to his dandy assistant and a couple of the livery servants, and gave directions at intervals to Michel the porter, who looked alternately to the strangers and the garden-house, and finally walked off towards that place with dogged alacrity.

I saw there was some preparation for new suffering going forward; and I was not slow to conjecture that its object was my fine looking young countryman, in the intrepid energy of whose mien, and in, what appeared to me, his uncalled-for agitation, I took it for granted his friends had discovered the incipient germs, that only required the forcing horrors of the *garden-house* to

burst into the rank luxuriance of insanity. But before I had time to mature my observations upon him into certainty, a shocking succession of events came hurrying on, that swept thought, and reflection, and calculation, before them, and left the mind in a state of bewilderment and chaos.

The young Englishman had suddenly turned out of one of the side walks, leading from the garden-house, close to that wing of the main building, where the yellow doctor, or devil, had entered. He held high language with his friend, and evidently expostulated in fluent French, although I could distinguish only the acute English accent of what he uttered, but not the import of his words. But a keener ear, and one more accustomed to the tones of his sonorous voice was close by, to catch enough of the beloved sound, whose faintest whisperings could vibrate through her heart. Just as the Englishman passed under one of the closed windows, the Venetian blinds of which could only exclude his person, but not the speaking evidence of his identity, from the dear object within, a scream, far different from what had, earlier in the evening, thrilled through me, burst from the closed window. I never heard so awful a sound of *joy*. It came deadened through the glass and the slight woodwork of the blinds, with a hushed, yet piercing tone. It made me thrill with mixed sensations of surprise and anxiety, for I at once recognized the voice for that which had before spoken its agony from the bars of the garden-house, and I only knew from it that the poor sufferer had been removed from that horrid place.

But if it so affected *me*—and if it made the two doctors and their satellite attendants dart forward with a guilty shudder, what will not the reader imagine of its effect on the amazed and impassioned lover, who no sooner caught and acknowledged its appeal to the deepest passion of his soul, than he sprang back in an attitude of wonderment—stood with wide mouth and straining eyes to catch the confirmation of the sound—and for an instant looked as though immoveably rooted to the spot from which he was, nevertheless, preparing to bound.

And again the voice did come; but no longer in a stifled scream, as at first.

"Edward, Edward! I hear you, though I see you not! I know you are there—Oh, come, come quickly up—fly to my help!—the wretch is dragging me from the window!" A suppressed and smothered utterance of sounds was next heard: but the lover required no more. With an agile bound he rushed into the low portal, and all the observers of the scene were in a moment on the spot. The doctors, Michel, and two other servants, darted past me, and the Englishman's companion followed them into the house. I hurried with the others up the stairs, and though but partially enabled to understand the relative situation of the two principal actors in this touching scene, I had no hesitation as to the side in which my sympathies were to enlist.

When I reached the landing-place, which terminated the ten or a dozen steps of the narrow stairs, I saw a low door, at the right hand, lying open, and the clamour from the little room it led to directed my steps. The scene within was of most painful confusion. The chief doctor, with the dandy, the servants, and the "friend" of the Englishman, were forcing the latter from the embrace of his long-sought mistress. The sallow doctor, and a coarse-looking woman, were dragging the beauteous girl from her lover's closely strained arms. Although they both struggled against their assailants, with force that would have been supernatural had not love braced the sinews of both, they seemed to have no look, no word but for each other. The most impassioned murmurings of rapture came through a din of threats and imprecations, like the hum of flower-enamoured bees in the tumult of a thunder-storm!

The fair sufferer—and well may I call her fair—was in a state of more than half undress. Her muslin night-robe hung loosely on her, and the flounced cap, which had been fastened below her chin, was open and untied, and thus converted to what the French, in their light mockery of even madness, call a *bonnet à la folle*.

It is needless to say what part I took in the rapidly

acted scene. Much less time than my pen could require to trace it sufficed to finish *that* part of the drama, and I soon found myself along with my struggling countryman, once more in the garden. The last thing I saw, as I made my forced exit from the room, was the yellow doctor and his female assistant forcing a sack-like covering, with long, loose sleeves, upon their forlorn victim, who struggled to the last, and waved her bare arms around her in determined resistance to their efforts. As we confusedly descended the stairs, low moans came from the door opposite the room we had just quitted. "There lies another victim!" exclaimed I; but the expression was unheard or unheeded.

The vigorous opposition to removal made by the Englishman, caused us some minutes' delay; but we were, as I have stated, soon in the garden. Arrived there, and the clatter of feet upon the stairs no longer interrupting the sounds within, we again heard the hoarse and suffocating screams of the lovely girl above, as the tyrants were violently attempting to choke her utterance. The agony expressed on the lover's countenance was dreadful, while these dire sounds pierced through him: but the sight that soon burst upon him and us rendered him absolutely frantic, and filled me with sensations of mental nausea more painful than I can describe.

As soon as we were again beneath the window of the fatal chamber, and that the young man's voice rose up unobstructed to mingle with her own, the hapless girl, roused to a state of despair and frenzy, made some more powerful efforts to escape from the fiends who held her, and rushed towards the casement from their insufficient hold. This I conjectured, from the frightful evidence that instantly presented itself. A sudden crashing of the glass of the window, and the crackling of the light wood-work of the blind, told of her desperate attempt at escape; and, in a moment, one of her snow-white and beautifully-formed arms was thrust through the aperture, lacerated and bleeding from her shoulder to her fingers' points. The blood streamed from it as though some main artery had been severed,

and the crimson stains trickled down the green blinds, and dripped upon the gravelled walk. Nothing could be more appalling than the appearance of that arm, waving to and fro in its sanguined torture, while the choked shrieks that accompanied the movement bore no tone of physical suffering.

An exclamation of horror burst from *all* the beholders of this sad sight. It was too much for even the hardened nerves and hearts of the fierce menials: but never shall I forget the anguished groans uttered by the young Englishman; his struggles were Herculean, to elude the sinewy gripe of his four or five assailants. He had but two helping hands to aid his own exertions, and they were insufficient for a time to cope with the odds against them. We were all hurried together, those who dragged and those who resisted, in the direction of the garden-house, the lovely arm still waving through the window-blind, until the white streaks which the stream left at first uncovered, became gradually dyed with red, and a bloody badge of suffering was alone to be distinguished.

"Drag them on!" vociferated the doctor, and at length the garden-house was visible. The sight of its barred windows and gloomy walls gave redoubled energy to the struggles for escape, and it was evident that the worn-out attendants were obliged to relax their hold.

"Now, then," cried I to my countryman, "one bold struggle, and you are free!"

The prostrate bodies of two of the servants gave palpable echoes to the words; and in half a minute the Englishman had vaulted with an agile bound across the balustrade of the terrace, and was seen freely flying through the olive grove, that hung on the sloping ground beneath.

"Pursue him! Pursue him!" cried the doctor; "Michel, dart through the south vineyard! Antoine and Francois, cut across the burying-ground! Quick!—the little door is unbarred. Bring him back, alive or dead!"

These rapid orders were as rapidly obeyed. The

three men sprang off in different directions, while the dandy doctor climbed cautiously over the balustrade, and descended the parapet, and having readjusted his neckcloth, and put on a pair of lilac gloves, he set off briskly through the olive grove, on the track of the fugitive.

I then found myself standing between the chief doctor and the Englishman's "friend," as even I considered and called him at the time. They still held me firmly, but with a persuasive rather than a violent grasp. The fact was, I believe, that the various records of national facility left on the countenances of the truculent ruffians who had suffered most in the scuffle, gave my present companions a rather respectful feeling towards an English fist. They therefore held me at full arm's length, and while we all puffed and panted a good deal, the "friend" addressed me—

"I supplicate you, Sir," said he, "to use no more efforts to further his escape. Let him be caught, I beg of you! You know not the real state of this affair—the peace of two noble families depends on his being secured."

"Curse their nobility! The happiness of two truly noble beings depends on his being free. Let me go!" cried I, with downright indignation, and shaking off both the arms that held me. My two antagonists, as I may call them, retreated out of the reach of my *gladiating* attitude.

"My dear Sir!" whimpered the doctor, imploringly, "if that madman escapes to the town, my establishment is ruined!"

"Your establishment be damned!" exclaimed I, as nearly as I could put the phrase into French—"He is *not* mad."

And I clearly saw he was not, or if he were, his "method" had enough of reason in it to redeem his madness.

I paused for an instant to recover breath, and decide in what direction I could best aid his escape to the suburb, which was close by, but to be reached only by surmounting several obstructions. I saw my country-

man act precisely as I did. He stopped on a little mound at the extremity of the olive grove to take breath, and look around him. He tied his silk pocket handkerchief round his waist, and having thus laid in a fresh supply of wind, he quietly waited the approach of the dandy doctor, who came trippingly along, and so occupied with taking care of his white trowsers, that he was close upon him without knowing it. He started, on raising his head suddenly, and seeing that he was alone with the Englishman; but the latter gave him no time for further astonishment, as he knocked him down flat into the ditch beside him, and then turned to the two liveried rogues who came furiously up to him. Two well-sent and scientific salutes, right and left, tumbled those fellows over, and left them sprawling. The dandy doctor quickly recovered his legs, and ran back the way he came as fast as they could carry him; and the two cowardly caitiffs followed his example, leaving the Englishman master of the field.

At this moment, however, I observed Michel stealing through the vineyard behind, with some weapon, of bill-hook formation, in his hand; and, trembling for the safety of my countryman, I lost no further time in crossing the balustrade and making towards him by the nearest path. Neither the doctor nor "the friend" attempted to oppose me, except by most ludicrous entreaties, to which I deigned no reply. I seized a pole that lay on the ground, and thus armed, I hastened on, and the Englishman, seeing my approach, took new courage, and observing Michel's treacherous design, he armed himself as I had done, and stood on the defensive.

But at this moment a new personage appeared on the scene. This was the housekeeper, whom I had not observed since dinner time, but who now came hurrying on towards us, through a meadow that separated a little burying ground from the close shelter under the garden-wall to the westward, and from which a low door, half concealed with a cypress tree, opened direct into the premises of the *Maison de Santé*. A truly benevolent expression beamed on the housekeeper's olive

face. There was no mistaking it—nothing sinister could have put it on. It made an instant impression on the young Englishman, and he looked the conviction of having gained another friend.

"Oh, Sir," said the woman, "come back instantly. You know not what you are doing in abandoning the place where she is."

"I will," replied the young man; "no danger can equal that of being separated from her, of leaving her with those monsters even for a moment. I will go back with you. I trust to your honest countenance, and ask but one pledge. Assure me that I shall not be placed in that frightful prison in the garden—that I may be left at liberty, or lodged near her, in the large building—promise me that—swear it to me!"

"I do promise you," said she, bursting into tears, and in deep emotion—"I have lived seven years in this place—I have known shocking things—seen shocking sights—but nothing so affecting as this. That poor arm bleeding from the window is dreadful to think of!"

"Oh God! oh God!" exclaimed the Englishman, "and I linger here—but, stop one instant. How do I know you are not deceiving me? How do I know you have the power to keep your promise? Tell me what authority you have—and then swear to exert it as you pledge yourself—here in this solemn place—on this grave—at the foot of this cross."

The woman seemed worked up to great agitation. She knelt down as desired. Her eyes streamed with tears; and she said, with deep energy,

"I do sacredly swear, that you shall not be placed in the garden-house. I pledge my existence to it—and if there is faith or honour in man, the doctor cannot fail to ratify my oath. Have no fear—but follow me to the house."

She rose, and taking the young man's arm in hers, she moved towards the little door. But he hesitated still, and seemed even to shrink back. The fine courageous expression of his features was changed to one of doubt, if not of dread. His brow and cheeks, so lately flushed, grew suddenly ashy pale, and he seemed

for a moment overwhelmed with some frightful apprehension.

Are there then, indeed, presentiments of evil allowed to operate on the human mind? Not the light phantasies of superstition, but the real warnings of Providence? Has man an instinct, teaching him to avoid the ills that threaten him? Should he, like the birds that fly the infections of the plague, follow the impulses that tell him *who* and *what* to shun? And is it false pride, not true philosophy, that makes us stifle or deny the awful whisperings of Fate? However each individual may answer these questions to himself, the results of the events I am detailing have forced the inquiry on me, many a time since *then*.

There was something awful beyond expression in the terrified agitation of the young man, as he looked on the door towards which the woman urged him. The southern twilight had now closed rapidly in, and it was almost night: a light sea breeze ruffled the tall trees of the garden, and sounded through two rows of alders, like a murmuring and melancholy water-fall. The cypresses of the grave-yard waved sullenly over our heads; and the pale and agitated faces before me filled up a picture of more than common gloom.

"For God's sake do not hesitate—come, come on! Oh! could I but tell you all!—Pray, Sir, urge him. You will come with us, won't you?"

"Certainly," said I, in reply to these latter words addressed to me; and I backed the house-keeper's entreaties with my advice that no time was to be lost.

"Well, then, since it must be so, I *will* go back. Heaven grant I am doing well for *her* safety; and Heaven knows I care not for my own!"

As he spoke these words, he raised his fine dark eyes with an expression of peculiar solemnity, and a flush suffused his pallid cheeks. We all passed over the graves, and entered the door into the deep shade of the garden, Michel slowly following with the rude weapon in his hand, like an executioner in the menacing attitude of ancient sacrifice.

The chief doctor, who had been a spectator of the

whole grave-yard scene, received us near the door, and he warmly expressed his thanks to the housekeeper and myself for our successful efforts to bring back the wanderer. To him he spoke in accents of sneaking suavity, assuring him of his tender interest, not only in his happiness, but in hers, who he *now* knew to be so dear to him. By this he implied his former ignorance of their attachment; but all that he said seemed to make little impression on him to whom it was addressed. He appeared to have but one purpose in his mind; and he hurried along in the direction of the house.

The doctor was alone, and, in answer to my inquiries, he told me "the friend" had left the place, for the purpose of consulting the municipal authorities, on the best means of recovering possession of my countryman.

"But we have got him back, thank heaven!" continued the doctor, "and now, for the best means of securing him." These latter words were whispered, more to himself than me. But I thought this was the time to interpose my positive demand, that no restraint should be attempted.

"Doctor," said I, "this gentleman has returned here on a solemn condition that his liberty is not to be assailed. I guaranty that his conduct shall not require any violence on your part, provided we are both satisfied of the safety of the unfortunate young lady, and that due care is taken of the wounds inflicted by the brutal conduct of your assistant; and his removal from about her I positively insist on."

"Whatever you wish, I shall be too happy to comply with, my dear Sir," replied he: "I myself will attend to the lady, and you shall see that she is safe and well; but I cannot consent that this gentleman's presence should be allowed to renew the paroxysm which is, I trust, by this time subsided. In the interests of both parties—in the interests of humanity—"

"Hush, hush, doctor, no more of this, if you please. Do you engage that he shall be free?" said I.

"You *must*, Sir," said the housekeeper, with strong emphasis; "I am pledged to it, and you know how you

are bound to grant this first request I ever made of you. I have sworn to this young man—you saw me take the oath—that he shall not be forced to the garden-house. Do you now ratify this pledge ?"

"That he shall not be *forced* into the garden-house ?" asked the doctor, with a cunning and quibbling look, which I alone seemed to remark.

"Yes," said the young man; "on that condition I am come back. Do you confirm it ?"

"Most willingly. God forbid that any thing should be done here for tyranny's sake ! It was your own impetuosity, my good Sir, that drove us to harsh measures; but the welfare of my fellow-creatures——"

"Enough, enough, doctor !" interrupted I; "we only want your *practice* now—not your *profession*. Come now, in the first place, convince me of the lady's safety. This gentleman will, I am sure, consent to remain below stairs. I recommend you to do it," said I, turning to the Englishman.

"Whatever is for the best," replied he. "I only wish for her safety: you will see her situation, and tell it to me truly ?"

"Depend on me," said I, and I followed the doctor up the narrow stairs. We entered the room, the door being ajar, and I saw, in the little bed which filled a small recess, the beautiful countenance of the object of my solicitude. She was pale, and apparently quite exhausted. Her eyes were nearly closed, her lips apart, and a listless and inanimate air in every feature. She was close covered by the bed-clothes, with the exception of her right arm, which lay outside the counterpane, swathed carefully up, and the stains of blood here and there oozing through the linen bandage. The woman sat by her side on a low chair.

"Poor, dear creature !" said the doctor in a plaintive whisper; "you see she has every possible care taken of her, even without my interference. Be assured that, let appearances be what they may, there breathes not on earth a more tender, considerate man than——"

"Do not name the scoundrel, Sir !" said I, aloud. "You must positively promise me that he shall be

wholly removed from his attendance here, or I and the gentleman below will watch at the door all night. Say nothing to me in his favour; he is an odious wretch!"

"Thank you, Sir," muttured a hollow voice behind me—"I return you my humble thanks, all I can offer you *at present!*"

A low bow accompanied the words, and the sallow doctor retreated out of the room, and entered one on the opposite side of the landing-place, slowly closing the door after him.

"That condition I insist on," said I to the chief of the medical triumvirate, without noticing the interruption; "and I care not if it be pleasing or the contrary to any of you."

"No intemperance, my good Sir," said the doctor, in his usual smooth way; "every thing shall be to your liking—every thing. Shall we now go down stairs and look after the gentleman below? you will be able to satisfy him of the lady's well-doing."

"I shall tell him what I have seen," answered I; and I left the room, throwing back one look on that face of exquisite beauty which looked so coldly unconscious of its loveliness, and scarcely gave evidence of life.

The agitated lover had stolen on tiptoe up the stairs, and listened on the landing-place to my last few words. He pressed my hand between his, and, heaving a deep sigh, he turned quickly from the door, which formed no barrier to his mind's advances, but which he considered himself bound, in honour to the doctor, and in delicacy to *her*, not to pass.

It was now dark. We retired to the doctor's study, and some slight refreshment of fruit and wine were partaken of by us all. The young man's mind seemed quite composed. He talked of the false conduct of his supposed friend, in joining with the doctor and his people to place him in the garden-house; but he did not speak with asperity, and his feelings seemed softened towards every one, from the mysterious influence, I thought, of the atmosphere with which love can so pow-

erfully imbue the mind. He returned many thanks to myself and the housekeeper, who not only sat with us, at the young man's particular request, but, with mechanical accuracy, helped us each to our exact portions of fruit and cake, and served us with sweet wine and liqueurs. The interest she appeared to take in the unhappy stranger gave me a high opinion of her heart, and all that afterwards occurred tended to strengthen my belief in her sincerity.

At the doctor's recommendation, the Englishman took a glass of some composing cordial, soon after which he expressed a wish to retire to bed, and in a short time I was pleased to see him soundly asleep in a very comfortable chamber adjoining the doctor's bedroom, and, like it, opening into the study. I had, from time to time, ascertained, both by the housekeeper's inquiries and my own, that the young lady quietly reposed, and seemed to suffer but little from the injury done to her arm. The doctor several times went to her apartment, twice with me, and oftener alone; but at each visit leaving the Englishman unobstructedly in the study, and shewing no overwatchfulness on his account. All this inspired us both with perfect confidence, and I finally retired to my room, about one o'clock, greatly satisfied with the turn things appeared to take, and anticipating, for the next morning, more of good to the lovers than I could rationally account for to myself.

CHAPTER VI.

Whatever the sensation might have been, whether apprehension on my own account, anxiety on that of others, or if, as I honestly think, a mixture of both, in which the latter predominated, it is certain that I never felt less at my ease than when I lay down in my bed, extinguished my candle, and began to reflect on my situation. The reader can run over, faster than I could recapitulate them, all the events of the evening,

and all the associated train of feelings arising from the recollection; and it may be imagined how unpleasantly the various painful objects appeared to my mind, in the gloom of my attic chamber. The insinuated threat of the yellow doctor was not the least prominent subject of inquietude; and the ambiguous pledge given by the head physician, for the safety of the young Englishman, appeared, in the obscurity of my situation and my thoughts, still more questionable than before.

After about half an hour, of what I may acknowledge to have been *suffering*, I rose from my bed, and, groping about through the chairs and tables, I succeeded in collecting a portion of my clothes; then laid hold of my trusty stick—the seasoned branch of a Medoc vine, which, before its office of supporting my steps, had furnished plenty of material for unsteadying those of others—and thus armed, I softly opened my door, and stole down stairs on tiptoe.

All that part of the main building where I was lodged, lay in deep repose. A dying lamp glimmered in one of the corridors, but no other sign of animation appeared as I descended; and no sound caught my ear but the low breathings of the sleepers, as I at times stopped and listened, in fear that the creaking of a plank under my foot might have disturbed the drowsy guardians of the house. When I reached the bottom of the stairs, I cautiously entered the passage communicating with the doctor's study, and I approached the door. All was hushed within, and I was satisfied that matters were as I had left them. Thus assured as to the safety of the stranger, I breathed more freely; and my anxieties naturally took the direction of the quarter where his lovely mistress lay. I accordingly unbolted a little door, opening into the vaulted way, by which I had originally entered the house, under the guidance of Michel. This led me unobstructedly into the garden; and I was in a minute or two under the window of the room where I had left the object of my present anxiety.

The faint beams of a night-lamp filled the crevices of the window blinds with that shadowy light, which, let

it come from what casement it may, always brings to my mind notions of illness and watching, though it as often proceeds from the dull taper of the sleepy student, or the starved rush that burns in the chamber of penurious superstition. I stood close to the doorway leading to the stair, and I distinctly caught an unusual and somewhat undefinable noise, repeated at irregular intervals. It was a dull and undetermined sound, like the stroke of a muffled instrument, as if a hammer in a trembling hand drove nails to the head, by stealth. My blood curdled in my veins, as the thought rushed past me that it was a coffin which they were fastening down.

I put my foot upon the stair, and was proceeding quickly up, when the shuffling sound of feet above made me pause a moment, and I then heard the closing of a door towards the court-yard, and the tramp of steps approaching. I immediately drew back, and out into the garden; and, concealing myself behind a clump of shrubs, I distinctly saw the persons that silently came forward. Michel, with a lantern in his hand, came first; and then I marked the figure of a priest, whose vestments made me, at the first glance, take him for a woman. A boy, dressed in a surplice, followed him close, bearing a crucifix; and they all passed into the low portal, and up the stairs. I stepped cautiously after their steps, and heard the door of the room gently closed, the light disappeared, and all was dark and silent.

I will not attempt to define what I felt at that moment. I do not wish to exaggerate, either as to the situation or the sensations it gave rise to. My steps seemed to turn involuntarily towards the garden house, and I was soon under the deep gloom of its walls. Confused murmurings came forth—the eternal hum of madness; and an occasional harsh voice, commanding silence among the unquiet spirits, was all I heard beside. I then walked, with a hurried step, towards the terrace, and I felt a relief in leaning against the balustrade, from which I looked into the chaotic darkness beneath.

Nothing was to be distinguished below, but the shade

of the vineyards and olive groves; while the fulness of perfume which rose around oppressed me by its cloying richness, unbroken by the slightest breath of air. Many nightingales poured forth their serenades to nature, in its depth of sleep; and the gurgling rustle of a rivulet through sedge and pebbles, was the only tone of life that broke earth's solemn stillness.

I gazed for a few minutes on the mass of gloom around me; and I then moved, without reflection or object, in the direction of the little door opening out on the meadow and the burying ground. As I approached it I heard sounds, which the quickness, arising from my late conjecture, at once told me to be those of a spade striking into the ground. I felt no doubt but that a grave was in the act of preparation; yet I could not resist a pang of painful surprise, when I discovered a man employed in making one, by the light of a lantern, which glimmered through the long grass and weeds upon the edge. He seemed to work well in his vocation, without "a feeling of his business;" digging away with a careless air, and flinging up the mould, indifferent as to whom it might once have formed and fashioned. His solemn employment had clearly no solemnity for him. It was indeed "a property of easiness;" and, in another mood, I should have been pleased to enter into parley with this knocker-about of skulls, and learn a lesson from his philosophy. But the horrid thoughts which now began to ferment in my mind, unfitted me for any thing but the mechanical observance of what was passing before my eyes; and I had just recollection enough of my situation to understand the necessity of concealment, till the scene I witnessed should be finally closed. I therefore placed myself in the dark shelter of the cypress tree that shadowed the door; and I there awaited the progress of the ceremony, which a shuddering instinct told me was about to be performed.

The hollow tread of the coffin-bearers, in the garden behind me, soon spoke in sounds of fearful reality. The entrance of the priest and his attendant boy into the meadow from the little door, brought the palpable evidence before me; but the calm, unimpassioned coun-

tenance of the holy man told no secret to my anxious curiosity. Neither did the unmeaning visage of the sleepy boy. Next came the coffin, borne by two men, whose legs alone were visible beneath the dark pall that covered them and their sad burthen. A man wrapped in a cloak closed the *cortége:* and the beam from a lantern, which he held before him, flashed sufficiently upwards to shew me that it was the yellow doctor, who thus consistently wound up the last scene of those mysterious events, in which he had been so conspicuous an actor. I shuddered and shrunk back, as he brushed against the branches of the tree that shaded me—and he seemed to start and look round for security from the alarm he had awakened in himself.

I cautiously followed the group along the meadow path, and stopped outside the wicket which bounded it, and through which they passed. Sheltered by the hedge, I saw the rapid progress of the ceremony, the lowering of the coffin, the shovelling in of the earth, the closing of the grave. I heard the low mutterings of the priest, and the more shrill, but as indistinct, responses of the attendant boy; and I closely marked the unmoved figure and unchanging face of the other unemployed spectators of the scene.

"*His* work is done," thought I, "and the passionless wretch has no remorse, to vary a look or agitate a limb! And has the world, indeed, forever closed upon the lovely victim to his and to others' crimes? Did *his* hand do the deed? And can such things really be?"

I could not, during the progress of the burial, muster calmness enough to enter collectedly into such a train of thought, as I felt to be requisite for one who would effectively pursue the scrutiny I was resolved to undertake. That the unfortunate girl had been unfairly hastened from her earthly tenure, I could not doubt. That the baffled violator of principle, and duty, and feeling, stood gazing into the grave for which his hand had furnished the tenant, I was firmly convinced. That the officiating priest, and the other necessary agents of the last awful office, were innocent accessories, I was willing to believe. My indignation was solely directed

against the wretch who had, I felt assured, caused the death, at the thought of which I trembled, in mingled rage and horror; and I made many deep and unuttered vows of vengeance, which I knew not at the moment how to execute.

I thought, however, that one important point would be to mark surely the faces of each of the associates in what I witnessed, that certainty of their identity might aid me in the inquisition I meant to demand at the hands of the magistrates, and of which I felt I could produce but vague evidence. With this object, I carefully bent my looks upon the priest, the boy, and the grave-digger; and I continued the observation by the fitful glimpses of the two lanterns, until all was nearly concluded:—and then a glance to the eastward showed me the opening streaks of dawn breaking through the gloom, and warned me of the necessity for instant retreat. I accordingly stepped cautiously back upon the pathway, quickly gained the garden door, and was soon once more under cover of the *Maison de Santé*.

I passed cautiously by the doctor's study, and regained my own room. I lay down on the bed, and turning my eyes to one of the open windows which looked eastwards, I endeavoured to regulate and concentre my thoughts, for the purpose I had resolved to pursue. But, as is so often the case with any methodized attempt, I found it utterly impossible to succeed. I tossed about, bewildered and confused, in vain efforts to arrange some plan for the certain punishment of the guilty villain, and with nothing fixed in my mind, but a determination to bring him to justice. But at times I felt myself start up convulsively, as the shocking thought of the murdered girl came upon me. The figures of the yellow doctor, and the assistant woman, who, I had no doubt, had lent her ready hand to the deed, seemed to flit before me; and the poor victim herself was presented in all the horrid combinations of suffering which fancy could invent.

Two or three hours must have passed in this state of conscious, yet unreasoning agitation, for I was aroused from it into one of a still more painful reality, by a

broad burst of sunshine which flashed into the chamber; and I saw, in utter astonishment, that the sun had already mounted far above the horizon, and had just forced his way through a mass of heavy clouds, which had till then imprisoned his beams. Quick as the light thus breaking on me, came the recollection of the young Englishman, and I sprang from my bed with a feeling of horror, at the new-born thought that he too might be in danger, if not marked for destruction. I speedily dressed, and descended the stairs with a rapid foot, careless of whom I might disturb, or, if I reflected at all, desirous rather of a host of evidence to the daylight scrutiny on which I was bent.

When I reached the door of the doctor's study, I started back, surprised to find it open. I looked in, but could distinguish nothing distinctly, the window being still closed, and the dull light admitted by the door-way showing no object much beyond it. As I remembered the localities of the room, I had no difficulty in groping my way to the one adjoining, where I had a few hours before left the Englishman asleep. I therefore cautiously walked towards it, and with outstretched arms, and somewhat aided by the dim light, I was soon within it—the door being also open. This circumstance caused me a pang of suspicion, but I had no time for speculation on my sensations or their causes. I quickly stood by the bed side, and I held my head down to listen for the breathings of the sleeper. I heard no sound.

With an agitation every moment increasing I put forth my hands, and felt in every direction for my friend —for so, in my dread of his peril, I could not help considering the stranger. Nothing met my touch but the cold sheeting, for the coverlid had been thrown aside, and the bed was tenantless. I instantly drew back the window-curtains, and threw the casement open; and, examining the room, I found that every thing belonging to the young man was removed.

I stood for a while transfixed in surprised alarm. I knew not what to conjecture. It was evident that no struggle had taken place. The bed and pillow bore the mark of the sleeper's form, but no part of the co-

vering or drapery was in the least degree disturbed. Every article of furniture stood in the places where I had seen them the previous night; and the whole appearance of the room gave the lie to my first apprehensions, that it had been the scene of some violent deed.

What, then, could have become of the stranger? Had some fabricated story lured him away? Had his false friend returned, and induced him to quit the place to which he so lately felt himself bound by the strongest of all ties? Or what were the causes of his disappearance? These questions rose rapidly and together in my mind, and ere they could assume the consistency of reflection, he who could best have answered them entered the room, and stood before me: this was the chief doctor. Believing that I saw in his evident amazement at my presence a certain proof of guilt, though I could not calculate its extent, I determined not to lose the opportunity of extorting from his surprise what I had little hope of recovering from his conscience.

"You start back, Sir! You are astonished to see me here!" said I, in the most peremptory tone of cross-questioning.

"And well I may be, my dear Sir: I little expected the good luck of so early a visit from the person I so ardently wished to see."

"You might easily have gratified that wish, did it indeed exist; but I much fear—"

"Do you, then, suppose I would disturb you, after the agitated evening you passed, for the sake of my own anxiety? You little know me. Could selfish considerations—"

"Doctor, I tell you, in one word, this canting and cringing will not now avail; I am not to be trifled with. Where is my countryman, whom I left last night under your care, and who is no longer here? I insist on an answer—an ample and immediate answer!"

"Time, time, my good Sir! You shall have a sufficient reply, and satisfactory, I trust. To gratify my friends—"

"Do not class me among them, Sir; I disown the title: answer my question!"

"Pray sit down, my dear Sir."

"No, Sir. I swear before Heaven not to know repose of any kind till *this* mystery is cleared up, and my countryman's safety secured!"

"Sir, I honour your feelings: it is thus that Englishmen, by their noble nationality—"

"Stand off!" exclaimed I, putting an end to this broken colloquy; and, roughly removing the open hand which the insinuating hypocrite had familiarly placed on my shoulder, I was hastily quitting the room, vowing to take summary means for procuring information, when he caught me by the arm, and, with his most sycophantic tone, entreated me calmly to listen to him.

"Where is my countryman? Answer me at once, and without shuffling or preface!" said I.

"Well, then, since you must know it, he is safe and well in the garden-house," replied the doctor.

These words fell upon me with a heavy and stupifying weight. I was thoroughly shocked, and stood for some minutes silent, while the doctor ran on in a fluent and *defensive* gabble, as I supposed; but I did not comprehend a syllable.

"Good God!" said I, at length recovering myself, "and have you been base enough to break your solemn pledge?"

"Heaven forbid!" answered the doctor. "No; the word of a man of honour should be as inviolate as—"

"What, then, am I to believe that he went quietly and of his own accord into that hateful den?"

"You may, indeed, believe it, for it is perfectly true."

"Then let me see him instantly, that I may learn from himself the reasons for such a compliance."

"That, my good Sir, is impossible just now. His situation requires the greatest calmness; he must not be disturbed. Besides, it is in direct violation of the rules of the garden-house to allow strangers to enter there. But," continued the doctor, seeing I was again about to reply too roughly—"but you, I promise you, shall form an exception to the rule. You shall see your countryman when he is in a state to receive you:

he is this moment reposing from the soothing effects of a warm bath."

"Reposing! Soothing effects!" uttered I, all my suspicions reviving. "Why, what has happened? What need had he of *soothing* remedies?"

"Why, you see, my very good Sir, the fact is that although he was removed without the least objection on his part—to that I pledge you my honour—still he afterwards became extremely violent, and we were forced (unwillingly, Heaven knows!) to have recourse to strong means to calm him."

"I know not what to think of it," said I: "I will not, however, *do* any thing rashly, nor *say* aught without good reason. I shall wait your pleasure to admit me to see this young man; and on your own head be the responsibility if any thing wrong should happen to *him*."

"Surely, my dear Sir, that emphasis means something? What is upon your mind? Speak out candidly."

The doctor's practised face was impenetrable to the gaze which I fixed on it. He did not acknowledge, in a single feature, or by the movement of one muscle, the justice of the reproachful glance. I thought words would have no better chance with him; and not wishing to waste them, or weaken the effect of the measures I meant to take, I resolved to retire to my room, and carefully note down what had passed before my eyes, and thus lay the regular foundation for all my future proceedings. Little did I think that the chance discovery of these very minutes several years afterwards, would induce me to make public, in this way, the occurrences they referred to.

I once more mounted the stairs, and entered my chamber; and, with as much calmness as I could command, I committed to paper a statement of what I had observed since my entering the *Maison de Santé*, in reference not only to the Englishman, but to his hapless mistress, from the yellow doctor's conduct at the dinner table, to the closing in of the grave. This task performed, and still no summons arriving from the doctor, I was resolved to wait no longer; and I again descend-

ed, determined to enforce, if possible, the immediate performance of his promise that I should see my countryman.

I knocked at the study door, and receiving no answer, I opened it and walked in. It was empty, and I immediately turned from it to seek the doctor, whom I supposed to be at the garden-house. On my way out, one of the men servants, who had taken so active a part in the events of the preceding evening, passed rapidly by me, with an expression of alarm visibly marked on his countenance. In the natural, but often misplaced avidity with which we attribute such a symptom to the object of our own anxiety, I felt that this frightened face had some connexion with the Englishman's situation. I accordingly laid hold of the wretch, and peremptorily asked him what had happened?

"Don't ask me, Sir; you will know it soon enough—but I was not to blame. Let me go; let me go."

"What is it, then? I will hold you fast till you tell me."

"I am sworn not, Sir—I dare not betray what passes here."

"Where are you hurrying to, then?"

"To the mairie, Sir—to fetch the mayor, that he may examine the ——. Let me go; it is as much as my life is worth to be seen with you."

A violent effort to escape from my grasp accompanied these last words, and he ran off in the direction of the court-yard. My first impulse was to follow him and force out the truth in the magistrate's presence, but a voice detained me by exclaiming, in a mysterious tone,—

"I will tell you all about it. He is *dead!*"

It was the fat lady who spoke. She stood at a little distance, among the shrubs, and looked at me with a vacant gaze.

"Dead!" echoed I, my mind fixed on but one object to whom the word could apply—"Impossible! Who told you so? What do you mean?"

"What I say. He is *dead*."

Her cold, apathetic look, and the oracular air with which this boding sentence was uttered, were oppressively annoying. I could not bear to stand parleying with this strange mixture of reason and folly, and I rushed towards the garden-house to obtain the direct removal or confirmation of my fears. As I closely approached this hateful den, the sound of voices coming from it made me pause a moment; and I distinguished the tones of the doctor and the housekeeper—his in entreaty and expostulation, hers in loud reproach.

"Be pacified, my dear Jacqueline," said he; "of what use now is this? Can it bring him to life again?"

"No, no—it cannot. All my bitter sorrow is of no avail—I know it well. His fine eyes will never open—his manly limbs are stiffened in death—and who is to blame? Is it not I? Did not I bring him back? Am I not perjured before God and man? Oh doctor, doctor, this crime will hang heavy on your soul!"

"Tut, tut, 'tis only a man the less, and a few years the sooner. You make too much of such an event. Besides, *you* are not to blame—no one indeed—no force was used to bring him back."

"You solemnly ratified my promise that he should not be placed in the garden-house!"

"Not *forced* into it, Jacqueline—and he was not. We carried him to it in his heavy sleep."

"And who lulled him to security? Was it not I—am I not the cause of all?"

"No, no—I mixed the sleeping draught, not *you*. All the blame is mine, if any one's; but it was his own deed."

"God grant it was for the sake of the souls of others! Oh, may Heaven forgive me for being even an innocent actor in this dreadful scene!"

I could no longer bear this. No doubtful meaning attached itself to what was spoken. None but the Englishman could have been thus alluded to. I burst through the shrubs that concealed me from the path, and I stood in the middle of it as the speakers came towards me.

As I burst forth, the doctor stood still, and seemed

wholly thrown off his guard. The housekeeper sprang towards me, with streaming eyes, and a countenance of deep anguish.

"Oh, spare me; in mercy, spare your reproaches!" exclaimed she, with a choked utterance. "You can say nothing so dreadful as what I feel. I am the cause of all—it was all my doing. What could have urged me to bring him back? Was it not to save his mistress from pollution? You do not believe I meant to betray him? But I am the cause of all!"

"Hush, hush, Jacqueline," whispered the doctor. "He knows nothing of what has happened."

"Yes, I do know it," exclaimed I. "Your voice should be lower, and your acts still darker, if you hope to escape the justice I will invoke. Yes, I do know it—another murder is added to the list of crimes which call for vengeance on this hateful place, and on all of you, a vile gang together."

"Murder, Sir!" cried the doctor, in a tone too bullying for perfect innocence, yet too bold for actual guilt—"Murder! have a care what you say, Mister Englishman; or I shall find means to make you pay for this outrage."

"Oh no, Sir—there was no murder. Do not accuse him of that. It was bad enough, God knows, but not murder."

"Where, then, is my countryman? Is he not dead? What has destroyed him? Was he not alive and well, two hours ago—less, indeed—when I spoke with you in your study?"

"True," replied the doctor, to whom I had put these questions—"true, he is dead—and he was so, even while we spoke together. Even then—at the very moment, perhaps—he destroyed himself, in a paroxysm of insanity."

"Then, by Heavens, you *drove* him mad!" exclaimed I. "But I do not believe it. If he be dead, it was not by his own hand he died. There has been some foul play. Where is your chief assistant? The sallow-complexioned one? Does he know any thing of this frightful event?"

"My poor friend! He does indeed—and wretched he is at the result. He was the first to hasten at the cry of alarm, and he vainly plunged his lancet into the poor lad's throat, even from the carotid artery no blood would come. He was stone dead."

"God forgive me!—God forgive me!" cried the housekeeper, wringing her hands, and weeping aloud.

"You make *my* blood run cold," said I. "How did this happen, if indeed you speak the truth?"

"How did it happen? naturally enough, and simply too—the way such things terminate nine times out of ten, particularly with Englishmen. Driven desperate at finding himself secured, he was not an instant alone before he strangled himself."

"But why secure him? Why leave him alone? Why leave him the means of suicide, if, as you persist in saying, he *was* mad?"

"Ay, Sir, now you ask rational questions, and I willingly answer them. It was indeed my intention to have told you of this event, and made you a witness to the legal inquiry about to be entered into. I was on the way to seek you when you burst into the path."

False as I knew this to be, I made no reply. I was utterly shocked at the event, the details of which I was getting by piece-meal. I listened without interruption; and the doctor's relation, true or false, was only broken in upon by the housekeeper's convulsive sobs and unconnected exclamations of self-reproach and sorrow.

"Yes, my dear Sir, it was my intention to have quietly and calmly prepared you for this sad news. I know, by self-experience, the shock its abrupt disclosure must give to a sensitive heart. Besides, in a highly excited state of nervous irritation, there is no knowing the effects these sudden surprises may create. However, as I said before, the man is no more—and the regrets of sensibility and affection, like the flowers strewed upon a grave, may adorn, but cannot animate the dead."

A pause followed this metaphor, which the doctor had no doubt often served up on such occasions, and a keen glance over the convenient pocket handkerchief which he held for a moment to his face, watched the

effect of his eloquence. It only added to my impatience, which he seemed to perceive, for he immediately resumed—

"Yes, my dear Sir, when we conversed together this morning, I believed that all was well—that the poor young gentleman had recovered from his fury at discovering the restraint he was in—for I must tell you that I felt it necessary for his own safety and well being to have him removed in his sleep from the room where you left him. Why these deep groans, my good Jacqueline? Neither your pledge nor my honour were compromised; no force was used. Yes, yes, Sir, I will go on. I read your anxiety in your looks. Well, Sir, you will acquit me of dishonour on that score. On the faith of a physician, I assure you, his removal was quite necessary. The sequel proves him to have been mad. Instead of calmly submitting to the salutary restraint, and the remedies we proposed on his awaking, he was quite furious. He pushed me from him—struck down my excellent friend and first assistant—raved wildly of the young lady—talked of love, and liberty, and God knows what—and when we at last forced him down on the bed and tied his arms, he burst into tears, and wept like a child."

"Poor fellow—unfortunate young man—may Heaven pity him and take him—what agony must have wrung his mind!" exclaimed the housekeeper in a fresh burst of grief.

"Well, Sir," continued the Doctor, "being much afflicted by his distress, I removed the *camisole*."

"The *camisole!*" echoed the housekeeper, and the word seemed to penetrate to my heart.

"Yes, Jacqueline, I removed the *camisole*. Don't start at that word, Sir—many a man has it saved from destruction!"

"Many a one has it driven to desperation!" said the housekeeper.

"Yes, Sir," continued the doctor, unheeding her interruption, "worked on by my sensibility, I fatally removed the best security for the patient's safety. But he appeared utterly exhausted—worn out, as it were, by his

struggle—and he calmly consented to be placed in a warm bath. Apparently soothed and refreshed by this remedy, he again lay down in bed, a faithful guardian was left to watch in his chamber. But no sooner was my back turned, (my worthy friend and first assistant being already out of the way,) than he persuaded the man to quit his post, feigning a wish for repose, and declaring he could not sink to sleep with another person in the room. The man—poor Ambrose—(a kind-hearted fellow—he did it for the best)—relying on the good faith of the patient, complied with this treacherous request; and scarcely could he have closed the door, when your countryman—most dishonourably, I must say, and with the peculiar cunning of insane persons—put an end to his existence."

"God forgive and pity him!" murmured the housekeeper.

The doctor stood still, took a pinch of snuff, and seemed to consider his recital as finished. But I was far from being satisfied. I passed over the doctor's reasoning on the point of honour, the treachery and cunning of the unfortunate young man; and I asked him to explain how he had perpetrated the desperate deed.

"Ay, Sir," replied he, "you may well ask that question, for I still ask it of myself. How could he succeed in effecting his purpose, when every reasonable means were carefully removed? Why, Sir, the most trifling thing that could be rationally turned to self-destruction was taken away—not even his cravat—not as much as a nail—not a pin was left in the room. But, Sir, madness will effect miracles in such a case—and you shall hear of the singular method taken by this maniac to baffle our precautions, and, you will excuse my saying, ungratefully to annoy us, and throw a stigma on this establishment—for assuredly he could have no other motive in strangling himself."

"For Heaven's sake, Doctor, don't speak thus! How *can* you feel enmity to the dead!" cried the housekeeper.

"Jacqueline, you are totally unable to enter into my feelings—so hold your tongue. I forbid you to inter-

fere further in this matter. Have you no consideration for me?—no resentment for the insult offered to me;—to me personally—to my professional reputation—by the fact of one of my patients having killed himself? If he had had even the honour, the delicacy, to leave a line or two behind him to thank me for my care of him, I should not have blamed him in the least; but as it is, I never will forgive him—never! But, see, here comes the mayor to examine into the transaction. I will do all I can to smother my just resentment. You may retire to the house, Jacqueline. Now, Sir, you can, if you choose it, attend and hear the witnesses give their statements to the magistrate. I am willing to pardon your hasty expression a while ago—I am not a man to bear enmity for inconsiderate warmth, but a deliberate insult I will never forgive—never! *Monsieur le Maire*, I have the honour to offer you my civilities. I ask you a thousand pardons for disturbing you so early this morning. But what can be said? If foreigners will, without respect to the authorities, or, I might say, to individuals, fix on unseasonable hours to violate the laws in this way, you know I am not responsible. I am sure *Monsieur le Maire* will acquit me of any want of due regard to himself or to the magistracy."

"*Monsieur le Docteur* will not do me the injustice to imagine that I could suspect him of aught inconsistent with the most perfect propriety and good breeding."

"Ah, *Monsieur le Maire*, you are too good—too indulgent—I shall be proud to endeavour to merit such distinguished approbation."

"Not at all, *Monsieur le Docteur*. A man like you has no want of eulogy. Your reputation—your well known character—allow me—"

Here the mayor held forth his snuff-box, and the doctor obsequiously plunged his thumb and three fingers into the proffered contents—the only compliment not thoroughly empty which was bandied between them. I felt the most impatient contempt of the callous physician and the cold-blooded functionary, who could so employ themselves, on the very threshold, as I might call it, of despair and crime. The poor housekeeper seem-

ed affected by still stronger emotions; and the doctor at length proposed to the mayor to proceed to the arrangement of "the little affair," as he called it.

"Most willingly," answered the mayor. "Public duty requires this examination on my part, unnecessary as I consider any inquiry to be, beyond that which you yourself might answer. Your respectable character is a sufficient guaranty."

"Ah, *Monsieur le Maire!*" replied the doctor, cutting him short, with a cringe extraordinary, and ushering him into the garden-house, the door of which had been unbolted and unbarred at his knock.

"Now, Sir, if you please," continued he, addressing me, and pulling off his black silk cap, and I stepped forward, followed by the housekeeper, who declared she would also attend, notwithstanding the doctor's hint to the contrary. He showed no disposition to contend the point with her; and in a minute more the low door was closed behind us by Michel, and we pursued our way along the narrow corridor. The doctor now took the lead, and stepped briskly on before the measured steps of the mayor, on whose track I followed closely, the housekeeper coming next, and Michel bringing up the rear. The aspect of the place was horrible—low, narrow, and dark—the doors of the several rooms on each side firmly closed, and the most discordant noises piercing through them, groans, shrieks, and in one or two places bursts of appalling laughter. The hapless maniacs had been, no doubt, cautioned to be quiet, and, with the cross-grained tact of insanity, had thus violated the commands of their tyrants.

"Come on, come on, Sir—fear nothing!" said the doctor, from the farthest end of the corridor, to the cautious magistrate, who gave evident symptoms of alarm; and we all silently moved forward to the place of our immediate destination.

The mayor shrunk back, and shuddered as he looked before him into the room. I sympathised with the shock he suffered, as if I had held a link of an electrical chain. The housekeeper tremblingly grasped my arm. Michel pushed her forward; and, following the impul-

sion, in a moment more we were all in the room, where stood the yellow doctor, and Ambrose, the attendant, who had had the care of the Englishman, and who entered the place by a back entrance, after he had conducted the mayor and left him in parley with the chief doctor in the garden.

One other object completed the awful and truly shocking appearance of the room—or, rather let me call it, the cell, for it was small, scarcely high enough to allow a tall man to stand upright, with one closely barred window, and totally unfurnished, but by a chair, a small table, and a mean ungarnished bed. On this wretched bier lay the outstretched corpse of the young Englishman, displaying the fine proportion of his limbs, for it was covered only by the shirt which had furnished him the means of self-destruction, and down the front of which two narrow strips had been ingeniously torn. His features showed but little of the distortion common in cases of violent death. The eyes and mouth had been closed by some accustomed hand, and the fine profile was placidly exposed. But the livid colouring of strangulation was on his face. A still darker trace was evident all round the throat; and on the left side of it a broad and bloodless gash, made by the too tardy lancet, showed that life had ceased to circulate when the blade was applied.

On the table by the bed side lay the simple apparatus of death. This was one of the bedstead screws loosened from its place, to which was tied the two strips of linen, torn from the shirt and knotted firmly together. With this a tourniquet had been constructed; and with such an apparently fragile noose the strong-nerved arm of despair completed the deed.

The mayor, who was an old timid man, but compassionate and clear sighted, seemed sensibly affected while he gazed on this sad spectacle of premature death. The housekeeper could not support the view. No sooner did her eye rest on the livid face than all the violence of womanly weakness broke forth, and she was removed from the room by the men-servants, insensible and in strong hysterics.

The mayor proceeded to his examination—but what a mockery of an inquest it displayed! A few hurried questions put to the two doctors and the attendants, loosely answered, and briefly noted down, sufficed for the legal ratification of the doctor's recital. All was admitted, and recorded as fact. How insufficient an inquiry into so awful an event! Not an oath administered—not a witness sifted—not a secret elicited, if there were such—not a fact established, by any testimony of even decent solemnity!

"Good God!" thought I, "is this indeed enough! Can *this* satisfy the watchful jealousy of judicial caution? Does the law require no more? And are whole millions content with such imbecile legislation? What, after all, if this story be not true—if this man has perished by some other hand than his own—if this den of suffering be indeed the depôt of murder?"

Such were the notions that arose, as the old mayor took down his imperfect memoranda; and as he prepared to depart, declaring the inquest to be finished, I felt stupified, and unable to move.

"Well, Sir," said the doctor to me, with an air of unfeeling selfishness that filled me with disgust, "I trust you are quite satisfied. You see the respectable magistrate has examined this affair—you see that our laws allow every indulgence to any foreign gentleman who may cut himself off without any reservation for the motives of the deed, though it were perhaps well if some posthumous disgrace, some *ex post facto* punishment, justified the insulted honour of a Frenchman! But, Sir," continued he, taking a large pinch of snuff, "the magnanimity of our code scorns to wage war against the dead—no stake is driven through the poor mortal remains in *our* country."

"It would be well, Sir," said I, "that individuals followed so good an example, and forebore to outrage the mind that they may have forced to madness—*if* indeed the body"—but I stopped short, not merely from a feeling of the uselessness of this contest, but from the conviction, which a moment's cool reflection had established, that the unfortunate young man had truly been his

own destroyer. All the appearances of the place confirmed the fact. There was no evidence of a struggle, not a mark of violence on the body, nor on the fragile garment which covered it, but the trace where the shreds were deliberately torn down. But the strongest proof of such having been the mode of his death lay, I thought, in the impossibility of such a tale having been *invented*, and such improbable means imagined and asserted for the accomplishment of the deed. But having seen the fatal evidences, and heard the details, I firmly believe that such was the fact; and since that day I have never doubted that the only parallel death which I have ever heard of—that of Pichegru—was truly stated, although I had before considered it impossible.

"Yes, doctor," resumed I, as the old magistrate stood close to me, complaisantly bowing, and throwing a last look of compassion on the corpse, "I am so far satisfied in this unhappy affair as to believe the recital I have heard. Any observation now as to the causes of the sad catastrophe would be of little avail. But there is another matter," and I here looked at the yellow doctor, "of a more questionable nature, into which I feel it a bounden duty to inquire, and to which I must request the mayor's best attention. In one word, gentlemen—I address you both—I witnessed the funeral of the lady in the church-yard last night."

"Well, Sir, and what then?" said the chief doctor, with great composure, while his assistant shewed no change.

"And what then?" echoed I. "Is it thus you allude to any thing connected with the mysterious death and midnight burial of that hapless female?"

"Lord bless you, Sir, there was no mystery in it. She died a natural death, and a happy relief to her it was, for the world does not hold one object to attach her to it. She was buried at night—we always bury our dead at night—the law allows it, Sir, and both death and burial are duly certified by myself and my friend and first assistant here, and the papers deposited in the office of *Monsieur le Maire* an hour ago."

"Yes, Sir, that I fully confirm, if you are interested in the subject," said the mayor, offering me a pinch of snuff, and moving onwards.

I knew not what to say. I saw that it was vain to attempt to penetrate the shield of professional tact and official sanction which covered the transactions of the place. I accordingly moved on, with the others, through the garden, silently but fruitlessly endeavouring to arrange my thoughts into some systematic train.

Michel, who had reached the house before we approached it, now came briskly up to the doctor, and whispered something to him.

"Indeed! Already!" exclaimed the doctor, and turning to his sallow assistant, he added something in a lower tone, of which I only caught the last words---"the parents (or the *relations*, for the French word is the same for both,) are come to take her away." And then addressing me, he said, "Come on, Sir, and you will see the departure of one in whom you are interested."

The fat lady was the only person who now inspired me with any peculiar interest beyond the pity I felt for all the forced inmates of the horrid place. But a minute or two shewed me that an object did exist to fill me with astonishment, and a momentary delight, that almost effaced the recent shock, but which as quickly subsided into a gloomy association with it.

Slowly supported down the narrow stairs by the attendant nurse, and emerging from the little portal, the face and form of the beautiful sufferer, whom I believed to be in her grave, broke upon me like a vision of a purer world, and made me start back in doubt, which was succeeded first by the delight, and next by the gloom I have described. Almost incredulous, I witnessed the meeting between the lovely girl and her father and mother, who came in person at the summons of her lover's treacherous companion, to snatch her, as he and they thought, from the danger of the Englishman's ardent love. They little knew they could but divorce her from the neighbourhood of his breathless body! The sweet girl rushed into their outstretched arms like one

reprieved from death. They deluged her with tears, and, utterly subdued by her evident state of suffering, they implored her forgiveness, like truant children at their parents' knees.

Nothing could be more affecting than the scene. The daughter embraced, with straining energy, the repentant authors of her being and the unintentional cause of her misery, of which even she did not then know the full extent. Has she since known it? Has some less faltering tongue than mine—for I dared not utter the truth when she inquired after *him*—informed her of his fate? I confess myself ignorant—perhaps culpably, but certainly not unfeelingly so—of her after history. Gratified to be witness of even the deceptive happiness I then saw her enjoy, I have never since sought for the information of her subsequent sorrow. Still less could I risk hearing of the fickle forgetfulness of his fate and her own sufferings, which the lapse of years has possibly brought; for beautiful, and passionate, and tender as she was, she was but human, and who may answer for the wasting influence of time upon the tenderest and truest heart?

I saw her leave the hateful scene of so much anguish, little knowing that she left within it a spectacle of horror, compared to which all the rest was ecstasy; and I have never since had tidings of her fate. The treacherous *friend* seemed shocked—thunderstruck, when he heard my poor countryman's fate. He made all the wretched reparation in his power, as if to throw a veil of decent repentance on his perfidy; and on him devolved the task of paying the last duties to the hapless youth, and of telling his sad story to his friends."

The reader will easily divine that it was the body of the poor old worn-out woman of which I had witnessed the funeral.

A strong representation was afterwards made in the proper quarter, as to those events, and others of the same nature, which had previously and subsequently taken place within the *Maison de Santé*. The establishment was in consequence broken up—the persons who

formed it were dispersed beyond the reach of my inquiries—and the mansion has since been converted into a seminary for young females, where, I hope, the purifying practices of virtue and intelligence have for ever wiped away the stains of its former pollution.

If, in this desultory sketch, enough has been shown of the likelihood of abuse in *private mad-houses*, and sufficient done to make *one* being pause before he exposes *another* to the same danger, the subject will not be without a moral, nor the writer without a reward.

THE

SISTERHOOD OF CHARITY.

How often have I regretted that the sisterhood of charity should be confined to the continent, and to catholic countries! It is an establishment at once so useful and so simple, that its extension to all the nations of the earth is as desirable as it is feasible. If the order of *Sœurs de la Charité* must be considered essentially religious, it is to be lamented that the protestant church has, for the two last centuries (unlike the early reformers), failed to extract the essence of what is really good in the institutions of the church of Rome. But this, the best of them, may scarcely be ranked among the religious orders; it is utterly free from all that is objectionable in the generality of them. It is rather an institution of pure humanity, without one of the degrading defects arising from bigotry or fanaticism. It does not immure its votaries in cells, wasting the body, and narrowing the mind. It sends them forth into the world, in all the beautiful energy of benevolence; and calls them back to their pious retreat, not soured by austerity, nor cramped by indolence, but glowing with the wholesome fatigue of good works, to be soothed by well earned and innocent repose.

It is true the *Sœurs de la Charité* make vows inconsistent with the protestant religion, and wear a costume, grotesque at the present day to the public eye, but venerable in their own view from its antiquity, it being the same that was worn by the foundress of the order

two hundred years ago.* But the principle of the institution is independent of, and superior to, shapes of dress or forms of speech, and can adapt itself with ease and advantage to every model of society, and every mode of faith.

Why, then, should it be excluded from us? Why should not England adopt, as a *civil establishment*, what France enjoys as a religious institution? Cannot charity preserve the existence of such a blessing without the aid of sectarian vows? Are oaths of "poverty, chastity, obedience, and service to the poor,"† wanting to inspire the generous hearts that throb with sympathy, and long for opportunities to aid the wretched? No, we might have the institution of "charity" solidly and surely formed amongst us, divested of all those extraneous trappings which clog the march of benevolence, and rob the principle of its simplicity.

I know not whether objections may exist, or might be imagined, against such an innovation on the actual state of things in England. There may be some real and rational obstacle; and abundance of bugbear opposition might be raised, by the frightened spirit of our own fanatics. Popery might be fancied lurking in every fold of even a *lay* sister's dress, by those whose prismatic vision could turn the snow white robes of Virtue into *scarlet*, and see the goddess herself enthroned in *Babylon*. But such opponents as these are not to be dreaded, though by no means *despised*. If prejudices could exist in such a case, they should be removed, and every measure taken to secure to the institution—what *must*, in fact, become its own wherever it exists—a wide and grateful popularity.

But though adapted to all countries, there is *one* where it is not known, but to which it is peculiarly

* The very unbecoming cap owes its origin to a piece of royal gallantry. Louis XIV. seeing a very pretty *fille de charité*, said she was so handsome as to require a veil to conceal her charms from the vulgar gaze; and he threw the white handkerchief he carried in his hand over her head. The form which it took for an instant gave the model for the cap which is worn to this day.—*Vide St. Vincent de Paul.*

† The four vows of the Sœurs de la Charité.

suited, and where its existence would be a living balm poured on a nation's wounds. I speak of IRELAND, where poverty, sickness, and distress abound in untold profusion; where, annually, hundreds die of starvation, thousands exist in hunger, and where there are millions in want! *There*, at least, is a fair field for the formation of a "Sisterhood of Charity!" and nowhere are the elements for its formation so abundant. I care not whether its members consist of Protestants, Catholics, or Dissenters. It ought to be open to all, for true benevolence is ignorant of distinctions. The Catholic *Sœur de Charité* of Poland, France, or Belgium, never asks a wounded man his creed before she relieves his hurt, nor demands the expiring victim of disease to make "a sign," ere she soothes his parting spirit. Why, then, should the society itself be exclusive, when its offices are not? Established in a Catholic country, and by a Roman Catholic saint, it was impossible to make it otherwise at first; but if once instituted among *us*, it should and would be free for the admission of *all*.

I confess myself enthusiastic on this subject; and I do all that an absent individual can do, by thus throwing before the public, as far as this book may go, a suggestion which some pure and elevated mind may mark and dwell upon, till it become, as it did on the formation of the society in France, a *passion* with one remarkable woman, and an object of solicitude and interest to the whole nation.

I shall not attempt to picture its advantages, or dwell upon them here. It appears to me the very extract and essence of Christianity put into action; and when I imagine for a moment the numbers of proud and, perhaps, prejudiced beings who perish in my country sooner than encounter the evident pauperism of an hospital, preferring *death* within the bare walls of their garrets or cellars;—when I reflect on the many who, with plenty of medicine and doctors to administer it, expire for want of consolation "to the mind diseased," I cannot but look with envy on the country I live in, and in sorrow towards that where I *would* live, to see the blessing that is enjoyed *here*, in this divine institution, and to know that it is *not*, and never may be *there*.

It was about the year 1629 that the foundation of the establishment of the Sisterhood of Charity was laid in France, by the pious exertions of Vincent de Paul, a priest, greatly and justly celebrated for his uncommon virtues and the untiring energy of his character. He was the founder of many charitable institutions, particularly *L'Hospice des Enfans trouvés.** He is canonized, and honoured with the title of Saint—as well merited in this instance as it has been misplaced in others. All the print shops in Paris display full length portraits of Vincent de Paul; and the artist has given a most speaking eulogy of this truly good man. Instead of being represented, like most of his brother saints, surrounded by the absurd and revolting types of superstition, he is placed in a street at night, in the midst of a winter storm, with an infant clasped to his breast, just rescued from the shroud of snow, to which some cruel mother had consigned it, and smiling in the face of its preserver. Such was the model (so unfrequently followed,) for christian ministers, and to whom is due the institution of "*Les Sœurs de la Charité.*"

Vincent was aided in his first efforts towards this holy work by a Madame Legras, a widowed lady of illustrious birth and large fortune, who associated herself with her pious confessor; and under their joint care it rapidly acquired consistence and immense success. The *congregation*, or society, of "*Filles de la Charité*" spread all over France, and was divided into many different branches, under various titles; many females of the first quality joined the association: and instances of virtue truly sublime were frequently displayed by almost every individual "Sister" to whom an occasion presented itself.

For nearly two centuries this admirable institution remained undisturbed, and completely identified with France, as well as with the nations into which it was received with avidity. But in 1793 even the *Sœurs de la Charité* did not escape the general ruin. The society was destroyed in Paris; the houses and property of the institution were seized and confiscated; the sister-

* The Foundling Hospital.

hood dispersed and persecuted, and many of them put to death. The wretched rabble in their frenzy destroyed the very beings who, in the moment of their worst excess, would have brought them succour and safety. In the provinces, however, the *Sœurs* were respected; and in 1801 the sagacity of Bonaparte, then enjoying his most glorious title, first consul of the republic, re-established the institution, which from that day has become more flourishing, more extended, and more venerated than ever.

The duties of the "Sisterhood of Charity" are simple in their mere mention. They are confined to attending the poor and sick, administering medicines, nursing them, and giving them the consolations of religion. But the details of such duties, put in practice, entail a varied train of trials and sufferings. A fund of charity must be deeply lodged in the heart of the female that enters into this order; and they who thus devote themselves to the service of the wretched, frequently abandon in doing so all the enjoyments attached to the possession of large fortune and illustrious birth. For this sacrifice is not as rare as might be imagined. Young girls, reared in the lap of pleasure, and destined to all the splendour and luxuries of the world, often voluntarily renounce them, and offer up a portion of the best years of their existence to the duties of benevolence and charity. We often see them flying from all the seductions of a worldly life, to embrace, with ardour, the pious obligations of such pursuits; and that, too, without having been excited to it, by the too frequent causes of self-sacrifice—one of those sudden losses which so cruelly reveal the power of death, or of those unlooked-for changes which betray the inconstancy of passion.

They go through a noviciate of a few months, and the period of their vows is only for one year; but many continue for a succession of years, and even for life. They can possess no property, nor enjoy any inheritance. They are supported and lodged, but their services are gratuitous. They are guided and governed

in their general administration by a code of instructions drawn up by the hand of Vincent de Paul himself.

Such is a slight outline of this sisterhood, a real blessing to the countries where it exists, and an honour to human nature. I will now offer the reader a little sketch (a translation of a fragment of a French pamphlet which I picked up by chance), in which the writer appears to me to have happily caught, in one of the simplest and best points of view, the feelings which actuate or inspire the "*Sœurs de la Charité.*" I must lay at the door of my *original*, the indiscretion, if there be any, of exposing the name of the virtuous maiden, although she is entitled to the admiration and applause of the public.

A

SŒUR DE CHARITÉ:

A

SKETCH FROM LIFE.

I HAVE often met, in the streets of the capital, a *Sœur de Charité*, whose youth inspired me with involuntary respect. Nothing could be more engaging than the expression of her countenance, nor more animated than her gait. There was an inexpressible charm in her blue eyes, and one could not help imagining that her woollen vestments concealed a beautiful form, as yet unchanged by time or fatigue. An air of health and content characterised her person, and was quite enough to satisfy those who might have attributed her apparent sacrifice to some one of those sorrows, of which youth exaggerates the importance and duration. One might say with certainty that misfortune had never approached her; and it was easy to imagine that her presence alone must, of itself, have been a happiness to the sufferers who enjoyed it.

At whatever distance I perceived the Sœur Eugénie, I, as it were mechanically, carried my hand to my hat; and my respectful salutation was recompensed by a benevolent smile, which gave me a sensation of pleasure in which pride certainly was mingled; but that feeling

I believe, enters into the most innocent actions of our lives. This interchange of salutations had established a sort of silent intercourse between us, of which we never failed to avail ourselves at each fortuitous *rencontre*. I was called one day to see a friend of mine, a poor devil of an author, whose talent had not preserved him from misery, and whose persevering labours had brought him to the verge of the grave. I was less surprised than delighted to see the young sister at his bed-side. She was reciting some prayer, in a low voice, while the poor invalid seemed to enjoy a profound sleep. The half-opened door allowed me to enter without being perceived; and, during some minutes, I contemplated the touching spectacle of innocence supplicating for misfortune.

A low sigh announced that the sufferer was awake. The Sister perceived me, saluted me as usual, and rose to offer her patient a potion that she had herself prepared. He took it in his hands in a sort of transport. His looks expressed the most lively gratitude. "My friend," said he to me, "God has taken pity on me, and has sent an angel to reconcile me to myself. Since I have had the happiness to fall ill, her care of me has been most tender and unceasing, nothing could surpass her charity; and life is the least benefit I owe her."

"Speak less," said the young Sister, "the doctor was particular in his orders on that point;" and then, turning to me, as to an old acquaintance—"he is much better—the doctor has pronounced him out of danger; but a single imprudence might be fatal to him. Do not allow him to say more than is absolutely indispensable." Then, after having arranged a second potion, which the patient was to take in an hour—"I leave you," said she; "my duty calls me away: the doctor will come at noon, and I will return in the course of the day."

My friend was just at that age when we have no faith in medicine, or the doctor who comes to administer it. He set more value on the visits of the sister Eugénie than in all the science of the faculty; and as soon as his guardian angel was gone, he assured me that he was entirely recovered, and feared nothing, and

that he only consented to be still an invalid for the happiness of receiving the attendance of Mademoiselle Montmégean; and as he perceived a movement of surprise, on my part, that I was not able to repress, he added, "Yes, my friend, this young person is the grand-daughter of the Count de Montmégean, descended from one of the most noble families of La Bresse. Her grandfather emigrated; all his property was seized and sold, and his young daughter, whom he had left in France, reduced to a state of great difficulty. At length, when our cruel countrymen were tired of crying '*Vive la mort!*' he came back, but would not accept any place under the emperor, and, in consequence, he could not obtain the restitution of his property. His daughter had married a rich financier, and passed a part of the year on one of her husband's handsomest demesnes, the Château D'Ambly, of which my father was the agent; and it is there that the young Sister whom you have just seen was born.

"Madame de Chavigny was exceedingly kind to my father. She took me into her favour, to the great benefit of my education, and of my *amour-propre* also. My father, depending on her protection of me, made me prosecute my studies. I studied for the bar; but a taste for letters seized me. That fever of literature has upset me. I fancied myself destined to resuscitate Moliere, or to dethrone Corneille. I began this double operation, by scribbling a comedy of pure imagination, and inventing an historical tragedy, which has excited the transports of my friends. Ruined by this success, I have renounced my profession, and my father has, in consequence, withdrawn the allowance he made me. Convinced that fame is superior to every thing, I have tried to live on my celebrity, and found myself singularly weakened by that *régime*; but I was not the less resolved to die, rather than make any application to my father. In this situation my name having met the ear of the Count de Montmégean's grand-daughter, she came to my assistance. All that the most tender humanity, the most ingenious charity could invent, has been employed by sister Eugénie to bring me back to

my duties. She wrote secretly to my parents, and vouching for a repentance, of which she had then only the hope, she has reconciled me with my family. You will easily conceive that I could not do otherwise than yield to such an influence. I have promised my father that I will in future devote myself to the profession of the law, and, I need not add, that I will keep my word."

"But," said I to my friend, "what motive could induce the grand-daughter of the Count de Montmégean to devote her life to such arduous duties?"

"If you knew," resumed he, "the purity of that truly angelic mind, the choice she has made would not surprise you. From her earliest childhood her every thought was charity. Born to a very moderate fortune, she passed her moments of recreation in the cottages of the poor; and always found means to serve them, whether in helping, or in sharing with them the fruits of her savings, or in calling the attention of her mother to scenes of misery, of which she would not otherwise have known the existence.

"Her mother had projected a rich establishment for her, and as long as she lived, Eugénie made no opposition. But a year after she had the misfortune to lose her, and when, at the expiration of the mourning, she was urged to conclude this alliance, she refused with as much dignity as courage. With infinite judgment and good feeling she divided her little fortune between those of her relations who were most in want of it, and the poor of her native village. It was at first apprehended that this young person (she was not then nineteen years of age) would not be able to bear so fatiguing a life; but you see how her zeal supports her, and what a beautiful serenity is imprinted on her expressive countenance."

My friend recovered; and, faithful to the promises that had been pledged for him, he made his father's latter days his happiest. About a year ago he surprised me by a visit.

"My dear friend," said he, "I am come to implore your assistance."

"On what account?" said I.

"The law of indemnity has given back to the Count de Montmégean's grand-daughter a fortune of two millions of francs. All her family write to entreat her to re-enter the world, where so brilliant a station awaits her. I fear that I shall fail, and I wish to be supported in this attempt by a help that may give weight to my arguments, and render the result less doubtful."

Though I was convinced in my own mind, that our visit would not have the success that my friend hoped for, still I consented to accompany him, and we set out accordingly for the hospital of ————.

We were conducted into the Sister Eugénie's parlour. She waved her hand to us. "Wait a moment," said she, with a smile, "there are others in greater haste than you are." This gave us an opportunity of witnessing her surgical duties, and of observing the angelic patience of this admirable woman. She left no word unanswered: the tone of her voice, so different from the harsh, unmusical sounds of the sufferers, had the magic power of allaying their pains and soothing their complaints. I was shocked by the gross expressions of one of the patients; but the Sister Eugénie, who guessed my thoughts, exclaimed, "He is suffering greatly; but he is generally very tractable." Thus she found excuses for every thing that displeased us. It was touching to see that celestial countenance following, with intense interest, the different chances of life or death in the unfortunates committed to her charge. Those delicate fingers extended with such precaution the lint on the wound of that labourer, whose apathy contrasted beautifully with the inquietude of his attendant! Her hand supported with such native grace the head of that old man, whose almost extinguished looks were raised to heaven, and then fell on the sister, as if recommending her to the divine protection! She seemed to forget that we were there; so natural did it appear to her to give prompt relief to sufferings which seemed to diminish from the moment when she was occupied in relieving them.

Her benevolent occupation over, the Sister Eugénie gave us audience. At the first words that my friend

uttered she became serious, and seemed to listen with great attention. The announcement of the immense fortune coming into her possession drew forth no expression of surprise; and after the recital of my colleague, as I was going to speak—"It is useless," she said to me, with precipitation—"My fate is long since fixed, and for ever. I am happy!"

"But your fatigues!"

"I have never been so well as since I renounced the world."

"Your resolution will drive your family to despair."

"I believe in the friendship of my relations; but God has not fitted me for society. If I grew old, and remained single, I should soon become an object of neglect, and perhaps of ridicule. If I decided on marrying, I own to you, I should be in the constant fear of being unable to fulfil the new duties that would then be imposed upon me. On the other hand, those I have myself chosen are so easy! You know not all the happiness that we enjoy here. Is not the certainty alone of contributing to the recovery or the salvation of one unfortunate an enjoyment preferable to all those that you could offer me."

Our secret had transpired, I knew not how; for the Sister Eugénie had hardly imparted her refusal to us, when we saw all the convalescents successively enter the parlour which we had quitted. They came, with tears in their eyes, to congratulate the Sister on her good fortune, and they praised God for having shed his blessings on her whom they called their visible providence. The countenances of those good people bore the impress of two very different sentiments; one might read there an affectionate satisfaction for the happy event which was, as they thought, to change the destiny of the Sister Eugénie, and at the same time one might discover a lurking regret at the idea that they were about to lose her to whose care they attributed their recovered health. But this last feeling was not predominant, for they threw themselves at her feet. Some took her hands, which they wetted with their tears, others pressed their lips on her dress with deep

respect. "Ah, Madame! Ah, Sister Eugénie! Be happy! Go—leave us—and may the benedictions of all the wretched that you have saved, accompany you!"

The Sister Eugénie made vain efforts to conceal her emotion; her face was bathed with tears of joy; her looks wandered with delight on all the actors of this touching scene; she smiled on them, and said to us, with an accent that I shall never forget, "God has just sent me a trial, which had nearly overcome me."

She afterwards called for writing materials, and taking a pen, she wrote, with a steady hand, her renunciation of her restored property; but she reserved to herself the power of distributing it; and to commence her generous intentions, she sent for a young novice, named Sister Agatha. The poverty of her family, and the express orders of her mother, had determined her to embrace, as a resource, a profession which is suited only to an enthusiastic and religious mind. "Dear sister," said she to her, "I know the goodness of your heart; I can appreciate better than any one all the efforts you make to be happy; and if a scrupulous attention to your duties were sufficient to prove a vocation, it would be difficult to doubt of yours. But I have read your heart: and it is not at the post where you are placed that you can most usefully serve your fellow creatures. Go back to the world, where your destiny is henceforward fixed; ensure the happiness of a husband, and become a model for mothers, as you have heretofore been an example for pious and devoted maids." Sister Agatha wished to reply; but her amiable friend and companion did not give her time—"I have just recovered a fortune, the distribution of which is already determined. You have too much friendship for me to refuse to subscribe to the little arrangements that I have made." With these words she took leave of us, and hastened to shut herself up in her oratory.

I learnt some days after, that not only was Agatha most generously provided for, on quitting the sisterhood, but that my friend had been summoned to a notary, with whom some one had deposed, addressed to him, a sum of thirty thousand francs, the donor unknown. It was not

difficult for him to penetrate the secret; but though he has continued often to see the Sister Eugénie, he has respected the mystery with which she wishes to clothe the subject. Not a word of his has ever betrayed the secret of his benefactress. But he thought it his duty to detail to her the purposes to which he applied the generous gift, thus availing himself of an indirect means of proving his gratitude.

THE

ONE-HANDED FLUTE PLAYER,

OF

ARQUES, IN NORMANDY.

"PENDS-TOI, brave Crillon! *nous avons combattu à Arques, et tu n'y étois pas*," was the laconic announcement which Henry IV. gave to his friend, of his most brilliant and almost miraculous victory. This memorable place is not more remarkable for its historical interest than it is rich in natural beauties. It has every charm that can retain its inhabitants on their native spot, or seduce a stranger to it. Pleasure in its possession, and pride in its recollections, must be sufficient to fill the mind of its villagers with all that can endear home; and its union of actual loveliness with associations of the past, forms a magical attraction to the idle traveller in its neighbourhood.

From Dieppe to Arques is about a league in distance, and an hour's walk—to the common pedestrian of the world; but for him who pauses and ponders on his road, who picks up mental aliment at every step, who finds a moral in a ruin, or a lesson in the rustling of a tree, who reads nature that he may know men—for such a one, from noon to sunset may be scarcely sufficient for the lounge.

Having strolled through the greater part of Normandy, eaten my fill of apples in the orchards which skirt its level highways, and drunk cider to my heart's con-

tent at the village inns, I found myself, on a fine evening in October, fast approaching the term of my pilgrimage —the aforesaid village of Arques. I left Dieppe behind me, reposing in the mixture of simple dullness and diminutive bustle of those little amphibious towns, which scarcely belong to sea or land, or which are rather common to both. As I struck into the fields, I heard the murmur of the fishermen mixed with the flowing of the tide—a Brighton packet was nearing the harbour, with its cargo of curiosity, and, perhaps, of care. Another had just sailed for England, freighted with joyous hopes of home and happiness, and no doubt with many a feeling of travelled triumph and importance. There was a fine breeze which, to these little vessels, running so close up to the wind, answered very well for either passage ;—so I turned my back upon the sea, quite at ease for each buoyant adventurer.

On clearing the town, we come immediately into the valley of Arques, and enter on the scene of the celebrated battle fought in September, 1589. If we reach the place prepared for its observance, we recall the description given by Sully: "Au bout de la Chaussée d'Arques règne un long côteau tournoyant, couvert de bois taillis. Au-dessous est un espace de terre labourable, au milieu duquel passe le grand chemin qui conduit à Arques, ayant des deux côtés deux haies épaisses. Plus bas encore, à main gauche, audessous de ce terrain labouré, est une espèce de grand marais, ou terre fanguese."* I could not make use of a clearer or better account, for every thing is precisely the same to this day, except that the marsh is changed into a fertile pasture, and looking to old Sully's detail of the battle-field, we have now the prospect of a grazing herd of cattle, instead of the "*escadron de lansquenets ;*" a flock of sheep in lieu of the "*battaillon des Suisses ;*" and that the wooded eminence echoes no more to the advancing shouts of De Chartres, Palcheux, Brasseuse, and the other heroic companions of Le Bon Henri.

Rising above the trees which envelope the village on the right, the ruins of the castle catch the eye, and the

* "Mémoires," tom. I. p. 151. London, quarto edition, 1745.

vividness with which the scene of upwards of two centuries gone was brought before us, is checked by the sudden view of these crumbling fragments of the once powerful fortress—that strong hold from whose embrasures the Hugonot cannon did, that day, such execution on the forces of the League. The illusion lasts no longer. The hand of Time is felt to be more powerful than the touch of Fancy, and we sink into the contemplation of the sober reality around us.

I wound my way up the eminence on which the old towers totter to decay; then, passing under the broken archway which received the triumphant Henry after his victory, and tracing the rugged path which marks the grand approach, I reached the summit of the mound that forms the basement of the vast expanse of building. The immense extent of these ruins gives a fine feeling of human grandeur and mortal littleness; and the course of reflection is hurried on as the eye wanders over the scenery around. This may be described in one sentence, as the resting-place on which a guilty mind might well prepare for its return to virtue.

While I stood musing "in the open air, where the scent comes and goes, like the warbling of music," and neither wished nor wanted other melody, the soft sounds of a flute came faintly towards me, breathing a tone of such peculiar and melting expression as I thought I had never before heard. Having for some time listened in great delight, a sudden pause ensued; the strain then changed from sad to gay, not abruptly, but ushered by a running cadence that gently lifted the soul from its languor, and thrilled through every fibre of feeling. It recalled to me, at the instant, the fables of Pan, and every other rustic serenader; and I thought of the passage in Smith's "Nympholept," where Amarynthus, in his enthusiasm, fancies he hears the pipe of that sylvan deity.

> At times mine ear
> Catches the sylvan god's extatic pipe,
> Trilling a melody so sad and drear
> For Syrinx' loss ———
> ——— but like the cuckoo's song,
> 'Tis ever distant, and its source unseen.

* * * * *

Could Nature's self be wrong,
Which, ever as this sweet lament occurr'd,
Would droop and wear a sympathizing mien?
The zephyrs closed their wings, or only stirr'd
To heave a sigh; the goats, and herds, and flocks,
On all the fields and rocks,
Ceased browsing, and upturn'd their anxious eyes,
With awful looks. Methought the very trees
Stood sorrow-struck, with pendant boughs, like ears,
List'ning the dirge. Yet with what ease
His charming pipe, when happier moods arise,
In voluble and jocund rhapsodies
Can madden into mirth whoever hears.
O what a merry, merry peal,
Then will his glib and dulcet reed
Lavish in many a liquid reel;
While Echo, with a rival speed
Upon the hill-tops dancing, strains her throat
To double each reverberating note!
Then Nature laughs outright; the wild flowers fling
Their incense up; the cattle leap for glee;
The jocund trees their branches toss on high
As if they clapp'd their hands; the cloudless sky
Smiles on the smiling earth, and every thing
Makes holiday and pranksome jubilee.

Repeating these lines, I became myself their practical and involuntary illustration; for, scarcely conscious of the movement, I descended the hill towards the village, in a pace lively and free as the measure of the music which impelled me. When I reached the level ground, and came into the straggling street, the warbling ceased. It seemed as though enchantment had lured me to its favourite haunt. The Gothic church on my right assorted well with the architecture of the scattered houses around. On every hand a portico, a frieze, ornaments carved in stone, coats of arms, and fretwork, stamped the place with an air of antiquity and nobleness; while groups of tall trees formed a decoration of verdant yet solemn beauty.

A few peasant women were sitting at the doors of their respective habitations, as misplaced, I thought, as beggars in the porch of a palace; while half a dozen children gamboled on the grass-plat in the middle of the open place. I sought in vain among these objects to discover the musician; and, not willing to disturb my pleased sensations by common-place questionings, I

wandered about, looking, in a sort of semi-romantic mood, at every antiquated casement. Fronting the church, and almost close to its western side, an arched entrance caught my particular attention, from its old yet perfect workmanship, and I stopped to examine it, throwing occasional glances through the trellis-work in the middle of the gate, which gave a view of a court-yard and house within. Part of the space in front was arranged in squares of garden, and a venerable old man was busily employed in watering some flowers. A nice young woman stood beside him, with a child in her arms: two others were playing near her; and close at hand was a man, about thirty years of age, who seemed to contemplate the group with a complacent smile. His figure was in part concealed from me; but he observed me, and immediately left the others, and walked down the gravel path to accost me. I read his intention in his looks, and stood still. As he advanced from his concealed position, I saw that his left leg was a wooden one—his right was a perfect model of Apollonic grace. His right arm was courteously waved towards me—his left was wanting. He was bare-headed, and his curled brown hair showed a forehead that Spurzheim would have almost worshipped. His features were all of manly beauty. His mustachios, military jacket, and tight pantaloon, with red edging, told that he was not "curtailed of man's fair proportion" by any vulgar accident of life; and the cross of honour suspended to his button-hole, finished the brief abstract of his history.

A short interlocution, consisting of apology on my part and invitation on his, ended in my accompanying him towards the house; and, as I shifted from his left side to his right, to offer one of my arms to his *only* one, I saw a smile on the countenance of his pretty wife, and another on that of his old father, and my good footing with the family was secured. We entered the hall—a large bleak anti-room, with three or four old portraits mouldering on the walls, joined to each other by a cobweb tapestry and unaccompanied by other ornament. We then passed to the right, into a spacious chamber which was once, no doubt, the gorgeously decorated

withdrawing-room of some proudly-titled occupier. The nobility of its present tenant is of a different kind, and its furniture confined to two or three tables, twice as many chairs, a corner cupboard, and a *secretaire*. A Spanish guitar was suspended to a hook over the Gothic marble mantel-piece: a violin lay on one table; and fixed to the edge of the other was a sort of wooden vice, into which was screwed a flute, of concert size, with three finger-holes and eleven brass keys; but of a construction sufficient to puzzle Monzani, and the very opposite of those early instruments described by Horace,

> "Tenuis, simplexque foramine pauco,
> Aspirare et adesse choris erat utilis, atque
> Nondum spissa nimis complere sedilia flute."

It is useless to make a mystery of what the reader has already divined: my one-legged, one-armed host was the owner of this complicated machine, and the performer on it, whose wonderful tone and execution had caused me so much pleasure. But what will be said when I tell the astonished, but perhaps incredulous public, that his "good right hand" was the sole and simple one that bored and polished the wood, turned the keys and the ivory which united the joints, and accomplished the entire arrangement of an instrument, unrivalled, I must believe, in ingenuity and perfection.

Being but an indifferent musician, and worse mechanic, I shall not attempt minutely to describe the peculiarities of the music or the management of the flute, as the maker and performer ran over, with his four miraculous fingers, some of the most difficult solos in Verne's and Bergbiguer's compositions, which lay on the table before him. Nothing could be more true, more tasteful, or more surprising, than was his execution—nothing more picturesque or interesting than his figure, as he bent down to the instrument as if in devotion to his art. I listened for more than an hour, as his mellow and silvery tones were echoed from the lofty walls of his chamber, and returned by vibrations from the guitar, which seemed as much delighted as myself, for it "discoursed most eloquent music."

This extraordinary man is a half-pay colonel in the French service, though a German by birth. His limbs received their summary amputation by two quick-sent cannon shots at the battle of Dresden (I believe.) Since he was disabled, he has lived in his present retirement,

"Passing rich on fifty pounds a-year;"

and happy is it for him that Nature endowed him with a tasteful and mechanical mind (rare combinations) while Art furnished him with that knowledge of music, without which his life would have been a burden. I do not consider myself at liberty to enter into the minutiæ of his eventful story, which he told with a *naïveté* and candour, enough to have charmed a second Desdemona. But with regard to his flute-playing, nothing could be more affecting than the touching manner in which he recounted his despair on discovering that he had lost his arm—the *leg* was in comparison a worthless and unregretted member. It need not to be told that he was an enthusiast in music; and when he believed himself thus deprived of the best enjoyment of his life, he was almost distracted. In the feverish sleep, snatched at intervals from suffering, he used constantly to dream that he was listening to delicious concerts in which he was, as he had been wont, a principal performer. Strains of more than earthly harmony seemed sometimes floating round him, and his own flute was ever the leading instrument. Frequently, at moments of the greatest delight, some of the inexplicable machinery of dreams went wrong. One of those sylphs, perhaps, the lovely imaginings of Baxter's fanciful theory, had snapt the cord that strung his visioned joys. He awoke in ecstasy: the tones vibrated for a while upon his brain; but, recalled to sensation by a union of bodily pain and mental agony, his inefficient stump gave the lie direct to all his dreamy paradise, and the gallant and mutilated soldier wept like an infant for whole hours together! He might make a fortune, I think, if he would visit England, and appear as a public performer; but his pride forbids this, and he remains at Arques, to show to any visitor unusual proofs of talent, ingenuity, and philosophy.

THE NIGHTMARE.

"Somnia fallaci ludunt temeraria nocte,
Et pavidas mentes falsa timere jubent."

CATULLUS.

THE various phenomena of dreams have hitherto baffled the speculations of all the physiologists, from Wolfius down to Spurzheim. Visions arising in sleep, and floating over the surface of the mind, are still as unaccounted for as the congregated vapours which hover in the Heavens. They are analogous to them in other respects as well, for they often present us the brightest and most fantastic imagery, and pour over our senses a dew, as refreshing as that which falls on earth "from the bosom of a dropping cloud." But were the illusory wanderings of the brain, during its demi-collapsed state--or when the nervous fluid ceases to communicate with it—or when our mental lethargy is broken by the excitement of some organ of sensation—or when, in short (to quit the jargon of theory, and speak plainly), we are asleep—were they but one continuous chain of pleasure, an article would never have been written on "The Nightmare." Passing, then, from those exquisite illusions of slumber, when "delighted thought in Fancy's maze runs mad," and forgetting the still more delicious waking dreams, those

"noontide trances, hung
With gorgeous tapestries of pictured joys,"

we must now turn to the dreadful visitings of that demon, who comes upon us at times, "making night hideous."

It has been supposed and asserted, that fearful dreams are the consequences of evil thoughts. It is true that they are often so; and, if the dreadful punishment of incubus were to fall only on the doers of bad deeds, its

retributive inflictions might be considered just. But we know that the preceding frame of mind has no positive influence on the victims of this inexorable fiend, who often passes by the breast "the deepliest stained with sin," to fix on the bosom of innocence and beauty: for

> "Oft on his nightmare, through the evening fog,
> Flits the squab fiend o'er fen, and lake, and bog,
> Seeks some love-wilder'd maid by sleep opprest,
> Alights, and grinning sits upon her breast."

Nor is sanctity itself a safeguard from the encounters of this evil spirit, call it by what name, or imagine it under what figure we may:

> "Saint Withold footed thrice the would,
> He met the nightmare, and her name he told;
> Bade her alight, and her troth plight."

We find in these two last quoted passages a rather puzzling difference in their respective personification of the spirit, arising from the absurdity of the compound word which designates it in the English language, and which comes from *Night*, and, according to Temple, from *Mara*, the name of a spirit, that in the northern mythology was related to torment or suffocate sleepers. It would be hard to find an instance of a simple derivation more absurdly mismanaged than in the formation of our word, which has led Shakspeare to make the night-demon a *mare*, and Darwin, to convert it into a fiend mounted *on* a mare. The latter bold supposition is certainly the more tolerable of the two, and is daringly embodied in Fuseli's picture; which, though in itself the essence of caricature, serves seriously to illustrate Burke's remark, as to the ludicrous effect produced by painting, whenever it attempts to bring before us the palpable forms of those phantoms which poetry makes forcible and grand.

This demon has been from the earliest times, the privileged tormentor of mankind, and a favourite subject with poets. The *nocturni lemures* of every age, have been honoured with many a painful celebration; but probably the finest description of the morbid op-

pression in which all this phantasma originates, is that of Eliphaz, in the fourth chapter of the Book of Job. "In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face. The hair of my flesh stood up. An image was before mine eyes; it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof."

Compared with the sublimity of this vague but appalling passage, all succeeding attempts seem feeble. The vision of Pompey, in Lucan's Pharsalia, is powerless beside it. Clarence's and Caliban's well-specified imaginings produce nothing of the same effect; and the details of Athalie's terrific dream, when her mother Jezabel appears before her, require the acting of Mademoiselle Duchesnois to make a legitimate horror rise superior to disgust:

> "En achevant ces mots épouvantables,
> Son ombre vers mon lit a paru se baisser;
> Et moi, je lui tendais les mains pour l'embrasser:
> Mais je n'ai plus trouvé qu'un horrible melange
> D'os et de chair meurtris et traînés dans la fange."

These instances are but a proof of the many efforts to produce a vivid image of the horrors of sleep, by means of spectral agency in its most revolting aspects. Other poets have traced the persecuting fancies which oppress the dreamer, unmixed with the personal terrors of those just cited. Thus Young—

> "My soul fantastic measures trod
> O'er fairy fields, or mourn'd along the gloom
> Of pathless woods, or down the craggy steep
> Hurl'd headlong, swam with pain the mantled pool,
> Or scaled the cliff, or danced on hollow winds."

And Coleridge, who, in the following powerful lines, seems to have been strongly imbued with the vague intensity that distinguishes the passage from holy writ above quoted:—

> "But yesternight I pray'd aloud
> In anguish and in agony,

Upstarting from the fiendish crowd
Of shapes and thoughts that tortured me:
A lurid light, a trampling throng,
Sense of intolerable wrong,
And whom I scorn'd, those only strong!
Thirst of revenge, the powerless will
Still baffled and yet burning still!
Desire with loathing strangely mix'd,
On wild and hateful objects fix'd.
Fantastic passions! madd'ning brawl!
And shame and terror over all!
Deeds to be hid which were not hid,
Which, all confused, I could not know,
Whether I suffer'd or I did:
For all seemed guilt, remorse, or woe;
My own or others still the same,
Life-stifling fear, soul-stifling shame!"

All these scattered allusions to the influence of nightmare in its various modifications, are but imperfect tributes to its potent operations, and only prove it a good auxiliary for poetic purposes. A more extended homage to its tyranny, and a wider elucidation of its effects, have been, however, lately furnished by a modern writer; and Nightmare, Incubus, or Oneirodynia, now stands upon its proper pedestal, in all the becoming obscurity and terror by which "it lives and has its being." All that has been before written on the subject of dreams, falls short of the work now alluded to, in the detailed display of their afflicting attributes. We cannot, indeed, raise it to the level of the beautiful imaginings which abound in our own periodical writings; the Spectators, Guardians, Tatlers, etc.; nor does it give any glimpse into the philosophy so richly displayed in the *Somnium Scipionis* of Cicero. Its merits are, singularity of conception, great eloquence, and an occasional strain of chaste yet voluptuous feeling which breaks through its generally exaggerated tone. It has been observed, that, "La Poésie a ses monstres aussi bien que la Prose," and *Smarra, or the Night-demons*, is probably the most eminent of those extraordinary abstractions which the romantic extravagance of the age so fluently pours forth. It professes to be a translation from the Sclavonian; but the pretended translator and real author is M. Charles Nodier, a writer little known

in England, but familiar to French readers from a wildness of genius, glowing style, and facility of composition, which hurry him on to fritter away his powers on works which can hope for no more lasting celebrity than that of the other ephemera of the day. One of his last effusions is "Smarra;" and he tells us in his preface, that to enter with interest into the secret of its compositions, it is, perhaps, a *sine quâ non* to have suffered the illusions of the nightmare, of which *triste phenomène* Smarra is the primitive name.

It appears also, on the authority of this author, that Illyria is the chosen region of this frightful disease; for he tells us, that it is rare to meet with a family in that country, of which all the members are free from its attacks; and, without offering any needless explanation on the part of his supposed Sclavonian original, in whom it would have been quite natural to have devoted his talents to the illustration of this national infirmity, M. Nodier gives us a train of apologetical reasoning, which, as applied to himself, is ingenious and eloquent: but infinitely more eloquent is the rhapsody which follows, and whose only plan,

> "If plan it may be called which plan hath none
> Distinguishable,"

is the recital of a tissue of dreams which never were dreamt, by a personage who never existed.

Lucius, the imaginary hero, travelling in Thessaly, in those days when the magicians of that country enjoyed the amplest exercise of powers which mocked the conjurations of the Olympian Psychagogi, and apparently under their influence, falls asleep on his courser's neck: but it is better to let him tell his own story.—"I had just completed my studies at the school of Athenian philosophy, and, eager to explore the beauties of Greece, I had visited for the first time the poetic land of Thessaly. My slaves awaited me at Larissa, in a palace prepared for my reception. I longed to wander alone, at the awful hour of midnight, through that forest, renowned for the mystic rites of enchantresses, whose green masses of foliage extend

like draperies along the banks of the Peneus. Deep shades had collected over the wide-spread canopy of the woods; and all was dark, save where the tremulous ray of some pale and mist-encircled star shot a fitful twinkling through the scanty openings which the woodman's axe had left at intervals in the overhanging boughs. My heavy lids closed in spite of me over my weary eye-balls, which ached from tracing the white path that hid itself in the copse-wood; and I could only bear up against the drowsiness which oppressed me, by observing the measured tramp of my horse, as the sand seemed to murmur hoarsely, or the parched grass to sigh beneath the pressure of his hoofs. If he chanced to stop, I was instantly aroused by the unusual pause; and, repeating his name in a loud voice, I urged his tardy pace to one better suited to my weariness and impatience. Startled suddenly by some unknown object, he bounded wildly from the path, poured from his fiery nostrils the half-smothered neigh of terror, wheeled round in dismay, and staggered back, still more terrified by the lightnings which flashed from the broken flints beneath his feet. 'Phlegon, Phlegon,' cried I, while my languid head fell on his neck, which he threw backwards in his alarm, 'oh, my faithful Phlegon! is it not time to reach Larissa, where every joy, and sleep, the sweetest of all, awaits us? One effort more of courage, and thou shalt stretch thee on a litter of the choicest flowers, for the golden straw which is gathered for the oxen of Ceres is not fresh enough for thee.'—'See you not, see you not,' replied he, shuddering, 'the torches which they brandish before us, consuming the wild heath, and mingling a baleful vapour with the air I breathe? How can you expect me to dare their magic circles, and their threatening dances, sufficient to appal the very horses of the sun?' And still the measured tramp of my horse's hoofs ceased not to echo in my ears, and a slumber more profound brought a longer respite to my uneasiness; only that, from time to time, a group of phantoms, lighted on their way by fantastic wreaths of flame, passed laughing over my head; or that a mis-shapen spirit, in the

form of a beggar or a wounded wretch, clung to my foot, and, in a phrenzy of horrible joy, suffered himself to be dragged along; or that a hideous old man, whose ugliness seemed to record the loathsomeness of crimes, as well as the deformity of years, leaped up behind me, and folded me in his skeleton arms. 'Courage, Phlegon,' cried I——"

After this opening, the reader is somewhat prepared for, though he finds it hard to follow, the mazes of unreal terrors which fill up the remainder of the work. The frightful train of adventures, of which the sleeping Lucius is the fancied witness, and in part the victim, are recited with a teeming and terrific minuteness.

"Have you not seen at Athens, in the first days of the year, when the all-regenerating rays of the new born sun fall gloriously on the Ceramicus, a long train of wan and ghastly wretches lining its walls? Their limbs are motionless, their cheeks hollowed by famine, their looks spectral and unmeaning. Some bend grovelling to the earth, like brutes; others are standing, but they lean against the pillars, and seem half sinking beneath the weight of their emaciated frames. These living spectres have scarcely preserved a trace of aught human. Their skin is like white parchment outstretched on a framework of bones; their eye-balls shew not a single spark of soul; their livid lips writhe with horror and dismay, or with mirth still more hideous, for they curl into a smile as fierce and scornful as the last thought of a criminal who braves and spurns his fate. Most of them are agitated by weak but unceasing convulsions, and tremble like the iron tongue of that sonorous instrument which children love to sound between their teeth. The most wretched of all are those who, by the dire award of all-conquering fate, are doomed to terrify every beholder by the monstrous deformity of their gnarled limbs and inflexible attitudes.

"It is only during the periods which intervene between the regular returns of sleep that they taste any respite to their woes. Foredoomed to glut the vengeance of the enchantresses of Thessaly, they relapse

into agonies which no tongue can express, as soon as the sun, sinking beneath the horizon, has ceased to protect them from the redoubtable queen of darkness. For this it is, that, with eyes rivetted on his path, they follow his too rapid career, in the ever baffled hope that he may for once forget his azure bed, and remain suspended in the golden clouds of the west. But no sooner does night come to undeceive them, shedding from his wings of crape a gloom, unbroken even by one of those livid gleams which tinged just now the summits of the trees, than a fearful murmur arises amongst them. Their teeth chatter with despair and rage; they crowd together, or shun each other's contact, and seem at each step to shrink from an assassin or a ghost. 'Tis night! Hell re-opens!——"

Among the merciless magicians who sport in the misery of their victims, Meroé, the sorceress, is the leading personage; and, of all the hideous monsters who figure in her train, Smarra is her favourite and well-beloved familiar. This precious fiend receives from his mistress a special mandate to torment the persecuted sleeper.

"She spoke, and the monster sprang from her burning hand, turned writhingly and rapidly in the air, outspread his wildly-fashioned wings, uprose, sank down, expanded, shrunk, and in the semblance of a deformed and spiteful dwarf, with nails of a metal sharper than steel, which pierced without tearing the flesh, he darted upon my breast, enlarged to a monstrous size, raised his enormous head, and burst into a fiendish laugh. In vain my glazed eye sought for some object of support. Thousands of night-demons played around me: women of stunted growth and aspect; red and violet-coloured serpents, spitting flame; lizards, with hideous human faces, crawling in blood and mire; heads newly struck from still palpitating bodies, looking on me with glaring eyes, and bounding on the legs and feet of reptiles. They danced in a circle around me, deafening me with their cries, terrifying me with their atrocious gambols, and parching my quivering lips with disgusting caresses. Meroé guided their movements as she floated above

them, with her long hair flashing forth flames of livid blue. Her features were the same as usual; but under their wonted loveliness I was shocked to discern, as through a transparent gauze, the leaden tints and sulphur-coloured limbs of the enchantress; her fixed and hollow eyes were floating in crimson; sanguined tears trickled down her cheeks; and her hand, as she waved it in the air, seemed to print upon the void the trace of a hand of blood."

After such a combination of horrors as this exhibition displays—

"Nocturnos lemures portentaque Thessaly rides?"

In this strain of still-increasing suffering, the dream of Lucius goes on, through epode and episode, leaving the agonies of Orestes and all other victims of Eumenides, goblins, ghosts, or witches, far behind. Of these excruciating torments I have already had enough, and I shall now take leave of them and their historian with tenderest feelings of compassion, (but not *sympathy*, thank Heaven!) if, as he admits by implication in his preface, he is himself the unfortunate subject from which his vivid pictures are drawn.

INTRODUCTION.

On the northern coast of Sicily, not far from the town of Mont-Real in the Val-di-Mazara, there is a little bay, where the island fishing-boats find shelter from the storms that frequently assail the coast, but where larger vessels might vainly seek for anchorage or safety. Rising from the midst of a forest, which stretches from the foot of Mount Santo to the sea, is distinguished the steeple of a monastery, belonging to the brethren of the order of White Penitents. Palermo is to the westward; and though full four leagues distant, the heavy sound of its bells can be clearly heard through the serene atmosphere in the stillness of night. To the eastward of the bay, a rude mass of rock rises proudly up, crowned by a bower of cypress. There are few evidences of animal life to be seen, except the sea fowl silently whirling in their circling flight, and the goats which bound from the rocky projections around, in search of the wild thyme, and other herbage, which profusely embroiders the ascent and perfumes the air.

The natural advantages of this spot have not been aided by man. The industry of the other parts of the island has here a striking contrast. Scarcely any trace of cultivation meets the eye; but flowers of the most beautiful colours, and the richest odour abound, and the air is by far more pure than in any part of Sicily. The rigours of winter, and the enervating heats of summer, are equally unknown. Delicious streams run through, and refresh the valley. In short, there is perhaps no corner of the earth more secluded, more healthy, or more beautiful.

Towards the close of the summer of 1819, I was travelling in the south of Europe, when unexpected circumstances forced me to abandon a project of visiting in de-

tail the whole of the Italian islands. I embarked at Reggio, in Calabria, on board a small vessel bound for Marseilles; and but a short part of our voyage was effected, when a violent tempest arose. Owing to want of skill and courage in the crew, we made but a feeble resistance, and we were blown directly towards Sicily. The inviting appearance of the bay I have just described, induced the captain to trust to its shelter; but we had scarcely reached the point which secured us from the winds, when we ran aground in the shallows that stretch far from the shore. The storm luckily abated, and the wind taking a favourable shift, enabled us to leave our dangerous position. But a day was spent in some refitting and refreshing, of which both vessel and crew stood in need.

I went on shore in one of the boats which were despatched for a supply of fresh water. In my admiration of the scenery, I wandered listlessly into the forest, forcing my way through myrtle and laurel bushes, till I suddenly stopped before a white marble statue, on a simple pedestal, raised on a mound which commanded a view of the forest, the valley, and the bay.

The statue was exquisitely wrought. It represented a peasant girl in the earliest bloom of womanhood, filling a basket with roses, which seemed to grow wildly at her feet. The expression of innocence and happiness, its never failing accompaniment, was skilfully traced on the charming features; and the scanty drapery was not meant to conceal that elegance of form and contour which is inseparable from perfect beauty, and is common to all stations in life.

The figure faced the sea, and was surrounded with rose trees and odorous shrubs. On that side of the pedestal were engraven the following words in English,

> "She has passed from among us, but her heart
> Is with us still;"

and an Italian translation of the sentence was chiselled underneath.

My admiration of the sculpture, and of the beauty it represented, was mixed with curiosity to obtain some

knowledge of the facts connected with it; for the English inscription proved it to be linked, in some way, with some associations which in this distant land I felt a sort of title to partake in.

While I was thus absorbed, I heard a rustling in the shrubs below me, and soon perceived a woman rapidly mounting a path, which led from the direction of the monastery to the place where I stood. I observed her distinctly as she approached: she appeared to be about forty years of age, tall, with the traces of beauty, but thin and wasted by mental or physical suffering. Her negligent dress, dishevelled hair, rapid movements, and unsteady demeanour, filled me with that irresistible awe, which the appearance of insanity, in any of its stages, so commonly excites. I withdrew a little, but not so as to lose sight of her. I know not whether she thought she was observed, but if she did, it was with perfect indifference.

She approached the statue, threw herself on her knees before it, and struck violently three or four times on the marble steps, with a stone which she carried in her hand. The sharp sound had something singularly impressive, as it rang through the forest. Then the woman bent her head, and laid her ear close to the earth, as if she expected some answer to her awakening summons. But she to whom it was addressed, replied not.

"Laura! Laura! Laura!" exclaimed the woman, in accents rudely harsh; silence followed the hoarse echo of her call. She then struck her clenched hand against her breast, tore her hair, and with groans and piercing cries, bewailed some untold, or perhaps, (as I thought), some imaginary loss.

Two men now appeared: they were almost breathless from the speed with which they had ran; they endeavoured to lead the woman quietly away; but she struggled fiercely, and with piercing screams, until a young priest of interesting, though by no means of refined appearance, came forward. At this sight the woman was at once appeased; she flung her arms round his neck, and sobbed deeply, but tranquilly, on his bo-

dom. In a few minutes the whole group had disappeared, and the stifled sighs and groans of the poor woman, alone told me they had taken the path in the direction of the monastery.

There seemed an attraction in these sounds, for I unthinkingly and almost insensibly, followed them, till the party reached the gate of the monastery. The romantic solitude in which this building was placed, formed in itself a sufficient excitement to my curiosity, but that was considerably increased by the scene I had witnessed: and altogether, I felt warranted in entering the open gate for the purpose of inquiries more minute than those of a passer by.

The porter soon brought me into the presence of the young monk, to whom I expressed my wish with as little abruptness as was possible, and with the best excuse I could frame, for what (notwithstanding my national right to know something of the circumstances relating to the English inscription,) might still seem an unauthorised intrusion.

The monk listened to me with great urbanity, and answered in a tone that spoke him to be personally and deeply interested in the subject. He was, however, reserved, and, I thought, unwilling to enter fully into it, until, in the course of our conversation, I happened to acknowledge myself to be an Irishman. I had no sooner done so, than a more familiar and confidential air was evident in my companion; I profited by this to the utmost, and, in short, obtained from him all the information I required, and much more than I expected. While I took my slight repast in the refectory, he went to his cell, and shortly returned with a manuscript which he presented to me.

"This," said he, "contains all the details of the story which I have lightly sketched to you, as far as I myself was not personally concerned. You wil perceive how much your being an Irishman has entitled you to the gift; and I not being able to read the English language, you will see that for me this MS. possesses but little value. As we walk down to the shore, I will tell you the few particulars of what passed after the written

narration was finished; you will then know completely the short history of Laura Pemegia."

The monk performed his promise as we slowly wended through the deep shades of the forest. When we reached the little bay, the boatmen were nearly ready to return to the ship. The fresh water, and some goats and fowls, were soon stowed in the pinnace, and we rowed away from the shore; the monk waving his hand, and showing by his gestures, that he valued more than its worth the Mosaic snuff-box of which I had requested his acceptance.

On examining my MS. I found that it was written in imperfect English, mixed with many *Irishisms* of idiom and expression; it was evidently done at long intervals. The earlier parts were in an unformed and childish hand, which greatly improved towards the conclusion, and *that* had taken the form of a journal, but very abrupt and irregular. I endeavoured to throw it all into a connected form, and to purify its errors as best I might. But I have not changed its style, and but slightly altered its phraseology here and there, and I thus present it to the reader. The passage which, as I have arranged it, forms the opening, was written on a detached sheet of paper, and was evidently almost the last page composed by the unhappy author. It was traced with an agitated hand, and was literally deluged with tears. But these had long since dried up, and left every word still legible.

LAURA PEMEGIA.

COUNTRY of my birth, once so dear to me! Beautiful forest, whose shades have so often sheltered me! Sweet stream, in which, youthful and innocent, I have many a time sported! I now return to you, in guilt and misery —witness my bitter tears! Fatal and treacherous sea! when the ship that bore me from my native shore skimmed thy smiling surface, why didst thou not swallow me up? Innocent then, and not knowing even the name of sin, death had been a blessing—death, my only refuge now!

Gracious Heaven! mercy, mercy and pity, for my poor children! They, at least, are blameless, and even for *me* there may be pardon. Oh, my beloved children, this is the evening hour, in which we were always together: perhaps, even now, you are calling my name —cruel thought!—Oh, never, never forget your mother!

Let me dry those tears. I would do one act of virtue—I would that my fate might prove a warning to the companions of my childhood—I would that the remnant of my sad life might be an example to those young and guileless girls who still gambol in yonder valley, as I once did—alas, alas!

This is my first endeavour to compose any thing in a connected form; my letters, such as they are, do not pretend to that. They were meant for only *one* being, who will find *no* imperfection in his too faulty Laura! What I am now about to attempt is by his wish. He will excuse all defects.

I was born on the coast of Sicily, not far from the foot of Mount Santo, and at no great distance from Pa-

lermo. My father, a poor fisherman, died before I could know him. He left to my mother his cabin, his boat, and his nets. My brother was some years older than I. He was my mother's favourite; but as he was good-hearted and kind to me, and as I loved him myself very much, no feeling of jealousy disturbed me.

From morning till night I watched our goats, as they browsed on the hills, while my brother and Anselm were out fishing. I played on the rocks all day, as happy as the goats I tended, and at nightfall I came back to the cabin just as gaily as they. Brown bread and milk formed my supper; my bed was of straw.

I grew up in ignorance of every thing beyond what I saw, and even much of *that* was inexplicable. I had no notion of the Divinity; but when the storms blew on our coast, and the fishing boats were tossed by the waves, I knelt down mechanically, at the foot of the high and rude cross placed on the shore, and I prayed fervently for Anselm and his companions. At twelve years old, I knew how to milk the goats, make cheese, knit a thick thread, with which my mother mended the nets, and gather flowers. I was indebted to this kind of life, and to my mother's dislike of me, for a total ignorance of evil. But neither had I the least notion of virtue. Nothing could exceed the simplicity of my thoughts. I loved to oblige my companions, to yield to them in all matters, merely because in doing so, I felt a sensation of pleasure. I had a mortal fear of offending my mother, because she used to treat me with great severity.

The day on which I completed my fourteenth year, was an important epoch in my life. I had risen at daybreak; and, joined by several of my young friends, ignorant and thoughtless like myself, I went out to gather our harvest of white roses, on the skirts of the forest, these flowers being a source of traffic with the chemists of the neighbouring towns. We culled our roses for some hours, and made our task a pleasure, by turning it into a playful contest as to who should first fill her apron. I got the start of all my companions in running to reach a rose tree which I knew to be untouch-

ed, and this made me gain the victory. I expressed my triumph somewhat noisily, when I saw suddenly before me a handsome young man, who stood gazing and smiling at me. His dress, and the colour of his hair, told me he was a foreigner, as well as some others who began talking to my companions. As he looked at me I became confused, because the poverty of my dress scarcely concealed my knees. I stooped down as if to pick more roses, but so awkwardly that I stumbled forward, and all the contents of my apron fell on the ground. The stranger helped me to gather them again. His eyes were fixed on me, which covered me with confusion. The gaze of a man above my own rank, was directed towards me for the first time, and I, by degrees, became alarmed. He said some words in a language I did not comprehend; and then, as if recollecting himself, he spoke to me in Italian, and asked me my name, and where I lived. I answered both questions truly, and without hesitation.

The other travellers now came close to us. I perceived among them a Sicilian. He approached me familiarly, and asked me nearly the same questions as the young foreigner, but in a tone very different, and as if he had known me quite well. I found myself immediately surrounded by the whole group. I became dreadfully frightened; my knees trembled; and I believe I was just going to burst out crying, when the young man motioned with his hand, and put an end to my annoyance. The party instantly withdrew, and we saw them strike into one of the forest paths.

I did not return home till near the middle of the day, to take away my dinner, which was almost always laid aside for me by my mother in a little basket, and which I usually eat upon the rocks, that our goats might not be left too long unwatched. As I entered the cabin, I was startled at seeing the foreigners all sitting round the table, and making a meal of our coarse brown bread, and some goats' milk and cheese. I sprang away to hide myself. My mother called me back harshly, and I dared not disobey. I slipped into the darkest corner of the room, and crouched down as closely as

I could. My mother handed me a little bread and some cheese.

"Take this, Laura," said she; "you can have no milk to-day; I have given it all to these gentlemen."

No sooner did the handsome young man hear this, than he rose from his seat, came towards me smiling, and offered me what remained in his cup. He asked me to drink. I was afraid it would make my mother angry, and hesitated, without refusing.

"Drink, then, without looking like a fool!" exclaimed she, with her usual frown. I took the cup from the young man, tasted the milk, and offered him the rest.

"Come, come," said he, "take some more," in a tone and with a smile which would have made me drink without being thirsty. He spoke to me for a long time, and seemed to listen with pleasure to my short replies. He finished by telling me not to be afraid of him. I promised him I would not; and indeed, I had already begun to be accustomed to him. He had light hair, curling all over his head, large blue eyes, very white teeth, and a beautiful ring on his finger. His clothes received a great share of my admiration. I had never seen any so fine. They were all perfumed; and my chief wonder was that he condescended to touch me with the tip of his finger. While he talked to me, the Sicilian and my mother whispered together at the far end of the room. I heard now and then a few words, and knew they were about me. The man having asked my age, I was somewhat surprised, when my mother replied that I was fifteen, although I was exactly a year less.

The rest of the party soon left the cottage, but the young man and the Sicilian staid till near night-fall. As they went away they said to my mother, "Remember your promise for to-morrow!"

"To-morrow," answered she, in a firm voice, but without raising her eyes from the ground. All the remainder of the evening she appeared thoughtful and uneasy; I supposed this to be caused by my brother's absence. His boat, with a few others, had not returned since morning, and the night looked threatening; I

went to bed very early, and no sooner had I laid down, than my mother, contrary to custom, came into the recess in which I slept; she sat down on the bed-side, without speaking a word; she gazed at me for some time, and when at length she seized my hand with a convulsive movement, I felt hers trembling violently. She inclined her head towards me, put her arms round my neck, raised me to her, and pressed me to her bosom; she then, for the first time in my recollection, kissed me, and she did so over and over again. I felt her tears covering my cheeks.

This unexpected burst of tenderness was astonishing to me. I was quite bewildered in endeavours to account for it; a sudden remorse seized me, and I as quickly gave expression to it.

"My dear mother," said I, sobbing, "you believe that I merit this tenderness, but indeed I do not; you think I took care of the goats to-day; instead of that I neglected them all day, gathering roses in the forest."

"Innocent child that thou art!" exclaimed she; then, after a short pause, she rose quickly, wiped her eyes, and in her usual voice she added:

"There now, go to sleep—yes, it was the goats I was thinking of."

With these words she left me. I soon fell asleep, but I dreamt uneasily and slept badly; and that was also I believe, for the first time in my life. The next morning my mother kept me in the cabin, I forget on what excuse. After breakfast she desired me to come to the door, and pointing towards the sea, she said,

"Look at that vessel at anchor, Laura. These foreigners are going away; tell me, would you like to go with them?"

She had scarcely spoken these words, when the handsome young man appeared close to us, with the Sicilian beside him; my mother pulled me aside quickly, but not harshly.

"My child, said she, with an expression of tenderness, still more affecting, because less violent than that of the night before, "this foreigner wishes to take you with him: will you go?"

I looked at my mother, scarcely knowing what I saw. Astonished, shocked, indeed, I could not speak a word; yet I could not possibly believe that what she said was in jest, for never during my existence had I heard her utter any thing approaching to one.

"Speak, Laura!" said she, impatiently.

"Go away with him!" exclaimed I, timidly; "go away with him! Why? For what purpose? Does he want to marry me?—I am too young, am I not?"

The young man turned away, blushing deeply, when he heard my question. The Sicilian burst out laughing; my mother took me aside into the recess, and making me sit down beside her on the bed, she took my hand, and spoke calmly, and with a serious expression of look and voice.

"Marry you, Laura! How could you think of such a thing? Great people like him never marry poor girls like you. But you will not be less happy if you consent to go with him."

"I thought it was not right for young girls to live with men who will not marry them," said I.

"Who told you that?" asked she.

"Don't you remember, mother, that the other day at the fountain, the neighbours were talking about Bianca's daughter, and said they despised her because she was constantly with Jacopo, the vine dresser, who would not have her for his wife?"

"Bianca's daughter is despised, Laura, because Jacopo is in the same rank with her, and there is nothing to prevent his marrying her if she was a proper girl. But when a great lord fixes upon a poor girl, it is because he really loves her and means to make her very happy. Do you understand the difference?"

"Not exactly, mother."

"Well, well, it is of no great matter, whether you do or do not. The question is, will you go with the young lord? You see how delicate his conduct is; he would not on any account take you without your consent, and positively forbids me from using my authority to make you go."

"Well then, I will *not* go. I never could bring

myself to leave home, to be separated from Anselm, from my companions, and my poor little white kid that would be sure to be lost;" and here I began to cry bitterly.

"My child, you must go. You cannot be so much your own enemy, mine too, and your brother's."

"How can I do any harm to Anselm in staying with him? I love him better than all the world."

"Look here," said my mother, in a low voice, and with a stern air; "see this cabin ready to fall on our heads; our boat is so bad, that it is at the risk of Anselm's life that he ventures out in the slightest breeze. When we have no roof to cover us, no boat to go a-fishing, what is to become of us? When we are perishing together of hunger and misery, you will have to say, 'All this is my fault—I might have saved us all—but I chose to see my mother and my brother die of want.'"

"No, no!" cried I, "I will not be so wicked: I will go, mother; I am quite ready to go—not with the Sicilian, but with the handsome young man!"

"That's right, that's a good girl; but don't cry so much," replied my mother, drying my tears, and caressing me.

"May I come back next year?"

"To be sure you may, and that all dressed with gold, so fine that nobody will know you."

"Oh, yes, Anselm will, I am sure."

"Poh, poh! this is foolish talk; you must get ready at once."

"Oh, mother, mother!" exclaimed I, seizing her hand in both of mine.

"What?" asked she impatiently.

"Stop for one moment, I implore you. I am not quite decided. May I not wait for Anselm's return?"

"Certainly not. I will not allow any more delay. The gentleman is already tired of all this?"

She left the house, from whence the others had already gone away. I wept and sobbed most piteously, but as quietly as I could for fear of my mother.

The recess in which this scene took place had only

one little window, of a single pane of glass, which saved it from being totally dark. A strange man came in, in a short time after my mother left me, and not seeing any one, he proceeded, before I had time to be frightened, to place on a stool a bag, which though not large, appeared heavy. He then left the house, and on touching the bag, I found that it was full of pieces of money. From what my mother had said, I had no doubt but that this was a gift from the young foreigner.

I was pleased at the notion of his generosity, and astonished at his wealth, but still more as to how he meant to employ me. Was it to attend him as a servant? I could do nothing but watch his goats, and surely there were people enough in his country who knew how to do that!

My mother soon came back, accompanied by a woman carrying two large bandboxes, full of various articles of dress. It was a dress-maker from Mont-Real. I was soon attired in a travelling costume; my dark brown hair was carefully combed and brushed; I put on shoes and stockings, which I found very awkward. In short, I was completely changed; and I must own that my tears flowed less bitterly.

While my mother helped to dress me, there was something contradictory in her whole manner. It was a mixture of satisfaction and gloom: sometimes she suddenly fell into deep thought, and then all at once started away, with some violent gesture, or muttering some words that were like curses. She did all she could to hurry me away. I heard her at times ask the fishermen and the sailors as to the state of the wind, and saw her more than once mount the rock beside our cabin, anxiously looking out in the direction which Anselm had taken the day before. Some one told her that it was not likely the ship could sail till next day. This seemed to irritate her, and when I spoke to her in a mild and humble tone, she said,

"I am anxious that you were gone, that this scene was over. It is painful to part from a child who has never given cause of complaint to her mother."

These kind words made me cry again.

At length my mother was to be satisfied. The wind became quite fair: Anselm did not appear. I lost my only hope, and my heart sunk. The hour fixed for sailing was past. The captain sent to say they only waited for me. The dress-maker from Montreal, and one of our near neighbours, conducted me, or rather carried me, to the boat, which waited on the beach. The young man did not appear, but the Sicilian stayed talking with my mother, who bade me farewell in a sort of sullen grief, and then entered the cabin and shut the door. The two women placed me in the boat, embraced me, and wished me all sorts of happiness. As they retired up the beach, I heard one of them say to the other,

"Our neighbour has done a bad thing."

"She will repent it," was the answer.

As for me, I was almost insensible to what passed. I could not summon force enough to weep. They took me from the boat into the ship, I scarcely know how. But when it began to move, and when, turning towards the land, I saw my young companions extending their arms towards me, and my beautiful white kid looking on all sides, as if he sought his mistress, my heart seemed torn asunder. I hid my face in my hands, and wept. I once more looked to the shore. I expected to see my mother kneeling before the cross, in prayers for my safety, but she was not there.

Among the people on the deck there was a woman, dressed in black, who seemed to feel greatly for me. Her countenance was of that kind that at once gives confidence. She spoke a few words to me in very imperfect Italian, but I comprehended that she wished to lead me to the place that was destined for me. On descending the stairs that led below, I cast one despairing glance to the right hand, for it was at that side that I knew Anselm was to be looked for. I distinguished three or four boats in the distance. I could almost fancy that I recognized our's—but it was now too late! I was totally miserab e.

I perceived on entering the room which they called

the state cabin, him whom I looked on as the cause of my sufferings. He showed so much emotion that I was alarmed; he walked backwards and forwards with an agitated air. After some minutes he sent away the woman in mourning, and sitting down beside me, took my hands in his, and pressed them affectionately without saying a word. There was no trace of anger in his looks, but they seemed to announce some struggle with himself. In fact, he said to me, with great emotion,

"Laura, it is not too late; say but a single word, and I will put you on shore again; but it must be on condition that you solemnly promise not to return to your mother."

"What do you mean?" said I, shedding another torrent of tears; "how could I make such a promise? Is it not for my mother, and the place she inhabits, that I suffer this grief? Of what good is it to me to land in Sicily again, if I must not instantly go back to all that I love?"

"This then is your decision?"

"Certainly, if it does not offend you. I know that I belong to you, but when I have lived a year with you, perhaps—"

"Who told you that you belonged to me?"

"My mother; and did you not give her money to build a new cabin that she might let me go with you?"

"Oh, woman, woman!" cried he, abruptly, and seemed afraid to say more. He passed his hands before his eyes, and turning from me as if it had been painful to look upon me, he said in a firm, yet a tender tone:

"Laura, I am incapable of deceiving you. No matter what arts may have been used for seducing your innocence, I must at once tell you that I never can marry you. I am not yet twenty. My family, but above all, my father, have claims on me, which I cannot violate—I never can marry you."

"I know that: my mother told me so; she said—"

"What did she say?"

"That grand lords like you never married poor girls like me."

"Why, then, have I taken you away?"

"That's the very thing I cannot understand, for I can do absolutely nothing but knit, and tend the goats."

"You must learn to love me, and make me happy; that knowledge will be worth all others. For my part I will make it my study to please you in all things; I shall love you better than any thing on earth. O, Laura! another project, a virtuous notion had entered into my head; but I saw you, and your bewitching looks totally took possession of my heart and soul. How could I feel you to be within my reach, and resist the power that urged me towards you!"

I listened to these words, without in the least understanding their meaning at the time. Thus passed the first day.

The remainder of the voyage was for me a continuation of new and delicious enjoyment. How truly he spoke! How sweet and how easy was the silence of love! Let any one imagine me, as I then was, a child almost, brought up as I have described, until fourteen years of age, without even the affection of a mother, and all at once becoming the object of regard to the most amiable of men. My ears, accustomed to nothing but rude sounds, suddenly filled with the delightful accents of love; without any guide, delivered up to myself, and without religion to light my way. It was thus that all things combined for my ruin, and my innocence, even, more fatally than the fatal beauty which nature had given me.

I attached myself at once and passionately to him whom I considered my only benefactor and friend! Who could have avoided loving him! His beauty was his least advantage. He was kind-hearted, good-tempered, sincere, and of unbounded benevolence. His liberality and frankness gained universal confidence, and the dignity of his manners seemed to mark him for command. The sailors all adored him; and I soon learned that the vessel was his own, and that he had been, for above a year, sailing about the shores of Italy and Greece, and was now returning to Ireland, his native country. I had never heard the name before, and scarcely knew

what was meant by other countries, or by the word foreigner. I was not long in learning the differences between people. The manners of the crew, for they were all Irish, were totally distinct from those of my own countrymen; and I was often amused, walking the deck arm in arm with Lord L——, to observe the joyous air of the men and the arch expression of their countenances. Whenever we appeared, there seemed a tone of happiness spread over all. I attributed this to their devotion to Lord L——, but they used also to gaze at me. One day some one whispered to another in my hearing, and in bad Italian, "she is as beautiful as an angel." Lord L—— was looking on me at the moment. It was the first time that any lips but his had uttered these words, and I blushed excessively. We retired to the cabin. He inquired why I blushed so deeply. I told him what I had heard, and that I was afraid some one else loved me, because they used the very words that he did so often. I begged of him never to take me on deck again, because I loved only him, and would not, and could not love any other. The most passionate caresses were his only reply. It was always in this way our conversation ended.

The few minutes occasionally passed asunder were not lost to me. Hannah, the woman whom I have spoken of, and whose sole duty was to attend on me, told me a thousand instances of his generosity from childhood up to the present time. It was she who informed me of his name and country. Hannah was the daughter of one of his tenants. Her husband, a soldier in an English regiment, had died in Sicily, and she was in the greatest distress when Lord L—— fortunately discovered her, furnished her with money, and offered to take her to Ireland in his yacht, for so the ship was called. She was about thirty years old. Her quiet manners and a tone of mildness and good-nature, decided Lord L—— to confide me to her care. He could not have chosen better; for never were better qualities united in a human being. She believed me to be, at first, the daughter of an English officer, who had died in Sicily, and that Lord L—— intended to adopt me and have me educat-

ed at his expense. This may serve as an instance of her simplicity. She was a long time without discovering the truth; and when she did find it out, she was afflicted by two feelings. She was as pious as she was grateful. She would if possible have saved me without offending her benefactor. I often caught her alone and in tears, and when she was convinced that the mischief was without remedy, she made a vow unknown to me, to devote her life to me. She kept her word.

Next to Hannah, the person that pleased me most was O'Brien, Lord L——'s valet. He was in great favour with his master, in whose family he had lived nearly thirty years. He enjoyed a great freedom, which he never abused. But he was always inclined to lecture, and give advice, which no one took amiss, probably because they never followed it. He took a great liking to me, which was not, however, any proof of my merit, because my belonging to his master was enough for him. But that did not seem to me sufficient to account for the kind of compassionate regard with which he sometimes treated me. One day Lord L—— surprised us together, while this honest fellow was endeavouring to make me comprehend something in praise of his master. Hearing himself named, Lord L—— said to me, laughing,

"Laura, don't listen to O'Brien. He is our most decided enemy—you don't know the advice he gives me."

O'Brien looked steadily at Lord L——, and having perfectly understood what he had said, replied,

"No, my Lord, it is not *I* who am her enemy."

He quitted the cabin immediately, and Lord L—— looked very much embarrassed.

The voyage was fortunate. It was, however, a long one. So they told me at least, but how short did it appear to me! The 1st of July, 1812, we saw the southern coast of Ireland. The sailors showed their joy by dancing, singing, and other boisterous proofs. We landed at Cove, in presence of a crowd of spectators. I was painfully affected, and could not help envying Hannah, who wept with pleasure to see her native land once more.

We made the least possible delay, and did little more than pass from the ship to a carriage drawn by four horses. We went rapidly along the banks of a magnificent river, and through the city of Cork. A succession of new objects seemed to flit past me as we hurried along, and a distance of near one hundred miles was accomplished in one day.

About nine o'clock in the evening the carriage stopped in a solitary but beautiful spot, at the entrance of a lawn, more brightly green than any I had ever seen in our own fertile valleys. Sweet smelling shrubs and flowers perfumed the path leading to a cottage, which was altogether a scene of enchantment to me. It was covered with jessamine, honeysuckle, and roses; and shaded by wide branching trees at all sides. When I entered the door I could not restrain the expression of my admiration and delight. Lord L——, who had rode on from the last stage, received me at the door with open arms. He exclaimed, as I sprung forward to meet his embrace,

"A thousand welcomes, my own Laura, to this place, which is now yours. May it remain so always! It never pleased me so much as now. Here, dearest Laura, I shall make you forget the coast of Sicily, and even your little white kid."

Will it be believed? The thought of my little favourite, made me, in that moment of delight, burst into tears!

For several days I did nothing but give expression to the ecstasy, which every thing in and about the cottage inspired, and ask the names of many articles, the use of which I did not know. My head seemed quite turned by delight, but my heart was steady to the one object of its affection; and the announcement that Lord L—— must leave me for awhile, oppressed me with grief. It was absolutely necessary that he should see his father, the Earl of D——, who resided entirely in England. I need not detail the circumstances of this first parting scene; one expression of his was like a new ray of light to my mind.

"Ah!" said he, "if I could but have *a letter* from my own Laura!"

The hope that this expression gave rise to, was my only consolation for Lord L——'s absence. He was no sooner gone, scarcely out of my sight, than I told Hannah of my determination to re-commence instantly my attempts at the rudiments of writing. During the voyage I had begun to learn to read, and even had made some efforts to hold a pen, for I cannot say more. Lord L—— took great pleasure in occasionally being my master; and Hannah, who was sufficiently educated for a person of her station, took the greatest pains with me. As she could not read Italian, and as Lord L—— did not wish to confuse my attempts to learn, I was obliged to begin my studies in English; and I learned both to read and write in that language, before I undertook my own.

Among other articles of beautiful furniture in the cottage, was a pianoforte. I knew nothing whatever of music, but I had a quick ear and a good voice. Lord L—— used to listen to me as I sung the wild airs of my country during our voyage, and he often accompanied me on his violincello, and sang with me at the same time. This gave me the notion of touching the notes of the piano, of forming chords, and in short, I made great progress in accompanying myself.

Lord L——'s absence was so long that I thought it would never end. He was very nearly a month away from me. His father, who doated on him, would not part with him sooner. Lord L—— was quite independent of him; but that made him the more desirous to shew the greatest deference to his wishes. The property of Castlerose, which surrounded our cottage, was part of the large estates left to Lord L—— by his maternal grandfather. The Earl of D—— was an excellent man, and a most fond father. Hannah told me many traits of his character, and I was very anxious to know him. One day when I expressed this to Hannah, she looked embarrassed.

"I know," said I, "from your looks, that you think he would not see me, because I am the child of a poor fisherman. But if his son loves me, I think I should be

in his eyes equal to the finest lady in the land." Hannah did not answer me. But she spoke often of a younger brother of Lord L—— in a manner that led me to suppose he had given some great offence to his family. The Earl of D—— had also a daughter older than his sons, and married several years before; and at three miles from Castlerose, in a splendid mansion of Lord L——'s, lived his aunt, Lady Catherine H——, only sister to his late mother, and for whom he had the greatest veneration.

These were the only particulars I for a long time knew respecting his family. He spoke on this subject very rarely, and with seeming constraint. On my part I scarcely ever mentioned my mother. Whenever I did, he appeared quite to suffer. When I once asked him the reason of this, he replied, in a confused manner,

"Be satisfied, Laura, to know that your mother is above all want; and if you value my happiness, never mention her again."

I concluded that before leaving Sicily he had found out her preference for my brother, and that his affection would not let him pardon the ill treatment of which I had been the object.

Lord L—— was surprised and delighted at the anxiety for improvement of which I gave so many proofs. He set about, in good earnest, the task of my education; and a union so delicious existed between us, that I thought nothing was wanting to make our happiness perfect. Every day I learned something new: my ideas expanded, and I became capable of reasoning on many subjects, of which so lately I could not comprehend the existence. I must acknowledge that we did not read much. What books could have given me more information than I obtained from the rich fund of his conversation, in words which entered into my heart!

Lord L—— did not, however, live entirely at the cottage. Clermont Hall was considered his residence, as well as that of his aunt, Lady Catherine. This lady, an enemy to all modern reforms, thought that five o'clock was very late for dinner, and in fixing that hour, she considered herself as making a great concession to her

nephew's wishes. Her strict adherence to old habits was favourable to us. She retired early in the evening; and thus, when there was not company at the hall, Lord L—— immediately set off for the cottage. No kind of weather ever kept him away; and in spite of my frequent reproaches, when he came in drenched with rain, he exposed his health daily to see me a few minutes sooner. In the fine evenings of summer I used to walk to the bounds of Castlerose to meet him; and any one who had seen us on these occasions, would have supposed it a meeting after six month's separation at least.

I was quite puzzled to reconcile Lord L——'s almost filial affection for his aunt, with the pains he evidently took to keep me out of her sight. I had no other opinion on the subject, but that Lady Catherine, loving him as she did, was jealous at my sharing his love.

As soon as I was sufficiently advanced with English to converse fluently, I was resolved to put into execution a project I had long before conceived. I had a confused recollection of having seen, once or twice a year, my mother and the neighbours going to mass at Mont-real. This appeared to me, at the time, a simple custom, which people submitted to rather than followed from choice. But the words "going to mass," had no distinct meaning for me. But when I found Hannah expressing much happiness at being able to perform this duty, as she called it, and saw what importance she attached to it, I felt the greatest longing to accompany her to St. Patrick's chapel, which was about three miles from Castlerose, in a direction opposite to Clermont Hall. I proposed this to Hannah one Sunday morning, as she prepared to go to the chapel, Lord L—— being absent for a couple of days, on business connected with the disturbed state of a distant part of the county. On his own estates nothing of the kind was ever heard of. Hannah replied to my proposal, that Lord L—— never wished me, as I knew, to pass the bounds of Castlerose without him.

"Very true," said I. "I will ask him to come with me himself to mass, next Sunday."

Hannah shook her head, incredulously.

"Doesn't he go to mass?" asked I.

"My lord is a protestant," answered she.

"What is that?"

"One who serves God differently from the catholics."

"Don't all christians worship God the same way?"

"No—some go to church."

"Does Lord L—— go there?"

"Sometimes," added Hannah, hesitatingly. "Young noblemen have not always as much religion as they ought to have."

All this set me profoundly thinking; and I cannot, even now, account for the anxiety which it gave me. On Lord L——'s return, I asked his permission to go to mass with Hannah the next Sunday. He seemed surprised at the request, desired me not to let Hannah put foolish notions into my head; and when I told him the singular interest which I began to feel about religion, he smiled, embraced me, and changed the subject.

I returned to it, however, not long afterwards, more earnestly than before. On this occasion he replied, with a seriousness proportionably increased.

"Laura," said he, "your anxiety on this point pleases me, and distresses me at the same time. I love to see that piety has sprung up naturally in your breast, but I fear the effect of the superstitions, that are miscalled religion, upon your susceptible mind. True virtue consists in doing good, such as you do to the poor people around us; not in attending to forms, that only weaken the intellect, and make an excuse for the want of real charity and true piety. The benevolent feeling that made you, the other day, give away a valuable trinket to a beggar, is worth all the pretence of going to mass on Sundays."

He alluded to my having actually insisted on a poor man taking a pearl ring, because I had emptied my purse for others, previously to his asking charity. But the fact best worth mentioning was, that the poor fellow had honesty enough to seek out Lord L—— and return the ring to him; an instance of probity not uncommon among the Irish of the very lowest class.

Our discussion ended by his promising that I should go to mass in the following spring. It was then winter, and St. Patrick's chapel was, he assured me, damp and unhealthy.

I had been upwards of five months living in the cottage. Winter had set in, and we had fires in every room. One evening Lord L—— returned from fox-hunting, for which amusement he kept a pack of hounds. Lights had been just placed in the drawing-room; and I saw Lord L—— cross it hastily, and come towards my bed-chamber, all covered, as he was, with snow and mud. An expression of rapture actually beamed from his countenance. He came straight towards me, threw himself at my feet, seized my hands, which he kissed wildly, looked into my face, rose up, sat down beside me, took me in his arms, gazed on me again with an expression of unbounded delight, covered my face with kisses, knelt down again before me, and remained gazing on me in complete silence.

I was astonished at this extravagance, but not alarmed.

"What is the matter with you?" said I. "Are you mad? Why do you look at me in that wild way? I am quite frightened at you!"

"Give me back your hand, Laura."

"There it is;" and he placed it against his heart. It beat so violently that I should have been really frightened, if he had not looked so happy.

"What is it then? Do not keep me in suspense," asked I.

"What is it? Do you then ask me this?—Is it possible you are disposed to jest at such a moment! Look at me, Laura. It was not you then who told Hannah?"

At these words, which explained every thing, I hid my burning face in his bosom, saying in smothered tones,

"No, no, it was she that told me—I did not believe it—I could not, on account of my youth;" and one of those silent scenes took place which make the deepest impression on the mind.

It was, indeed, then true that I was going to become

a mother! What a crowd of happy thoughts sprang up at once in my mind! Until this day, we had enjoyed only the realities of the present—now we revelled in all the delights of hope. Night and day, waking or sleeping, I could think of nothing else. We talked together for whole hours on the one subject of our coming delight.

In the month of May, 1813, my new born child was placed in my arms by my faithful Hannah, whose tears of joy mingled with my own. Every thing of previous suffering was forgotten when they told me that I had given birth to a fine boy. But his first cry had nearly killed me. I had never seen a new born infant. I imagined that the tones of its voice would have been faint and feeble, almost like those of an unfledged bird chirping in its native nest. Instead of that, a hoarse croaking burst upon my ear. I felt sure it must be a monster. I insisted on seeing and touching it. Oh! who but a mother may tell the effect produced in my heart by the gentle heavings of his little breast, as I pressed him to me, forgot my foolish apprehension, and bathed him in tears. As to his features, I was forced to wait till the next morning; but they assured me he was a perfect beauty, and the very image of his father.

I slept well, notwithstanding my impatience. At daybreak, Hannah, finding me to be awake, opened the curtains and showed me the child. I could not restrain entirely a scream of astonishment. I expected to see a fine clear skin, fair curling hair, a Grecian nose, smiling mouth—in one word, to see "the image of his father."

Instead of that, they handed to me a little being, wretchedly ugly, and quite red, without hair, and its eyes scarcely visible amidst its unformed features. To make matters worse, it made a most disagreeable face at me, and began to cry. Hannah and the nurse were both shocked and scandalized at my exclamation of dis-

appointment. But need I say I soon became satisfied with my child!

The joy of Lord L—— was little less than mine, and his attentions to me are not to be described. I soon recovered my health and strength. The child improved every day. His skin became delicately fair and fresh. He had a quantity of light curly hair, fine blue eyes, a sweet little mouth, and a nose, which would, I was sure, become Grecian, one day or another. He was baptized, and called Frederick after his father. While I nursed him, I used to look on him for hours without being tired. I could scarcely believe it possible that I was his mother.

Although Lord L——pretended to be jealous, it was easy to see that he doated on his son. I loved to see the child in his arms, but I never could help laughing at his awkward manner of nursing.

Lord L—— came of age a month after Frederick was born. It was a day of general rejoicing and real happiness. The whole country seemed carried away by enthusiasm; but respect for its object prevented any excess. It was not possible for any one to enjoy a greater popularity than Lord L——. He was more than an indulgent landlord. He entered into the affairs of his tenants, with all the interest of a friend; he reconciled their disputes before they became quarrels; he quelled many a riot before it changed into insurrection; his prompt appearance often saved the necessity of a troop of soldiers. In short, he spent his whole fortune in the country from which he received it: he devoted his whole time to the improvement of the people. He soothed their prejudices and repressed their faults; and while some of even the wealthiest of his neighbours were content with reclaiming their bogs, he laboured at the same time to reclaim his tenants. He was a good example to the numbers of rich landlords, peers and commoners, who drain their fine country of its resources, and give it back nothing but their contempt.

But these are reflections of later days. At the time of which I write I knew nothing but that I was happy. I lived with him who was all to me, and our child, who

was but a part of us, in Castlerose, which was my universe, in absolute seclusion, knowing nothing, nor wishing to know anything, beyond the limits of my retreat.

I am wrong! one of my wishes, my only one beyond the cottage-walls, had not been yet granted. The constant attentions required by my little Frederick, left no time for it. When he was weaned, I reminded Lord L—— of his promise that I might go to hear mass with Hannah. He did not refuse my request. We accordingly set out together one fine Sunday morning: it was exceedingly warm, so that I had only put on a light scarf over my muslin-dress, and a white lace veil on my head.

I still recollect, with a sensation of awful pleasure, what I felt on entering the chapel. I was powerfully affected on seeing a crowd of persons of all ages, addressing their prayers at the same instant to the Supreme Being. When the sounds of the organ sounded through the chapel, I thought myself transported above the earth. We had arrived rather late; the mass was just over, and the first words I heard from the voice of the priest was when he ascended the pulpit. His air and manner were deeply impressive. My attention became so fixed, that it at length grew confused, and I gradually became unconscious of the preacher's words, although sensible that they were vehement and impressive.

In a short time, I became quite overpowered by the heat of the crowded chapel. I was not accustomed to the suffocating oppression of such a place; and Hannah, who saw me become pale and faint, immediately removed me to the open air. At this moment Lord L——, who came to meet me, approached in the little pony phaeton, which was called and considered as my own carriage, though I never had courage enough to enter it without him. He was quite frightened when he saw me; but we soon reached home, and the rest of the day was passed in repeated vows on his part, tha I never should go to St. Patrick's chapel while the warm weather continued. I could not help smiling at

the recollection of his winter objections on a former occasion.

"I see, Laura, that my anxiety is a matter of amusement to you," said he. It was the first time that the slightest reproach or ill-temper had escaped him. I burst into tears. He kissed them away. I returned his embrace. He repeated it—and so the affair ended. His concluding words were, however,

"Laura, remember, you go no more to St. Patrick's!"

I submitted, of course, to this inflexible decision, but I deeply regretted it. To recompense me in some sort, Lord L—— had constructed for me, a little oratory beside my dressing-closet. I quickly arranged this place, and ornamented it with the most valuable things I possessed. On Sundays and other holidays of the catholic church, Hannah and I regularly prayed together in the oratory, and my devotion was never greater, nor indeed so deep and so sincere, as when I could, at the same time, look upon my child quietly sleeping in his cradle.

Eighteen months after the birth of Frederick, I could, in fact, say *my children*. The birth of a daughter completed the only wish which I had to form. Lord L—— chose that she should be named after me, as Frederick had been after him. She was, however, called Laurette, to distinguish her from her mother.

I will not dwell on the delighted days which I passed with my children, nor on the contrast of their characters, nor the variety of their beauty. They were to me *perfection:* my consolation when Lord L—— was absent, and the links that bound us to our happiness when he was at home. When he dined at Clermont Hall, we always went in the evening, if the weather allowed us, towards a little shrubbery at the side of the lawn looking in the direction which he was sure to take on his return. From a rising ground within the shrubbery, quite shaded by some large chestnut trees, we could perceive the high road to Dublin and that which led to Clermont Hall. I had had a cross fixed there, which I called the "Cross of the Rock," although there was not a fragment of rock to be seen; but the name and the object reminded me of home, and I loved at times to think of scenes and persons of whom I never spoke.

When Lord L—— appeared at a distance our handkerchiefs were all floating in the air, for the children were sure to do as I did. As soon as Lord L—— perceived us, he answered by a like signal, and away he started at full gallop to reach the cottage before us; but notwithstanding his horse's speed, we often won the race. And day after day this was repeated, and always with delight. The pastimes of idleness, however ingenious, may become tiresome; but I do not think that those of nature and affection ever can.

I was one evening sitting at the foot of the cross, with the children beside me, when I suddenly heard the sounds of several voices from the road to Clermont Hall. Lord L—— had given a grand dinner that day, and I thought it was he and some of his guests that were approaching. He was not of the party, as I very soon understood. I dared not move from the eminence, lest these noisy gentlemen might see me, and I was somewhat alarmed at their boisterous tones. I kept the children close, hoping the strangers would pass by; but they stopped within a few yards of where I stood. I saw them clearly as they looked towards the cottage, which presented from that point one of its prettiest aspects.

"There is the cottage of Lady L—— that is to be," said one of the young men, stopping his horse suddenly.

"She is devilish pretty, and I don't wonder that Lismore should marry her," answered another.

"You have seen her?"

"To be sure I have. Wasn't I at the chapel the day that Father Glyn preached at her till she fainted, poor thing?"

"I wonder who or what the deuce she is," said the third person; "whether lady or peasant, French, Greek, or Spaniard? Lismore is so d——d close on that point."

"He's a wise fellow for it," spoke another.

"She loves him, they say."

"Ay, as such women love."

"They have a child?"

"Two."

"The devil they have! That makes the thing seri-

ous. What says the old earl? His son George has married the dancer, hasn't he?"

"Ay, and Lord L—— is going to take *his* part in the ballet."

"We shall see who will carry the point, the earl or the damsel."

The party moved away, and the rattling of the leaves made me lose the rest of their words, every one of which I could have greedily swallowed. I cannot explain how much I suffered during this conversation. I was no longer a child. I was nineteen years of age. Old enough to suspect a mystery, but not to penetrate it. I was filled with a vague uneasiness, and the certainty that, in loving me, Lord L—— had displeased his father. I lost no time in repeating to Lord L—— all that I had heard. He was embarrassed, and evidently annoyed; but in spite of all my efforts, he passed over the subject lightly, persuading me that it was only the giddy conversation of a few young men who had taken too much wine. Finding it impossible to obtain the explanation I wished, I was resolved to satisfy myself on the one main point. I begged of him then, most seriously, to tell me if his father was really displeased at his attachment to me?

"Certainly he is—but simply because he dreads my giving up England wholly for your sake."

"Then, for Heaven's sake fly to him—prove that in loving me you forget no duty to him or others."

"My dear girl, be satisfied—all will end happily, depend on it!"

In spite of this assurance, and the fond embraces that followed, I was *not* happy or satisfied. I did not apprehend any sudden evil. What had I to fear? He loved me! But I could not help observing an occasional melancholy in his face and manner, particularly when he came to me directly after being with Lady Catherine. These slight symptoms were but the prelude to a fatal alteration in my destiny.

Lord L—— having made a long stay in England during the year 1817, we flattered ourselves with the hope of passing together, at Castlerose, the whole of the following summer. In the month of April letters arrived from London, saying that the earl was dangerously ill, and required to see his son. I speak only the truth in saying that it would be impossible to tell which of us suffered most on this occasion.

"Good God!" cried I, "if the earl should die without seeing his son! If I should be the cause of Lord L—— losing his father's blessing!"

This shocking thought seemed to give me wings. I flew rather than ran to give orders for the journey.

And Lord L——! I was not satisfied with his conduct —no, I was not satisfied. Should he have thought of *me* at such a time? I adored him—yet I wished him gone from me each moment. But he stood, stupified as it were, and without power to move. I could scarcely believe it was he. One moment he ordered his horses. The next he countermanded them. Knowing that I alone caused the indecision which kept him from his duty, I almost threw myself on my knees to implore him to set out. At last he acceded to my prayers—and we parted.

When the painful moment for his setting out arrived, I walked with my two children, beside Lord L——, as far as the cross on the little hill. It was a lovely day, and the leaves were bursting thickly from the trees. I could not repress my tears.

"This is the first time," said I, "that you will not see the trees in flower! You will at any rate be back with me before the leaves fall from them?"

He pressed me against his heart. I endeavoured to speak to him of the duty which called him to his father. The sound of my voice seemed to agitate him. He looked at me with a singular expression of mingled pain and pride, and said, with a tone of suffering,

"And is it *she* who reminds me of my duty! *She*, whom they would—Laura, listen to me! The words which the dead carry with them to the grave ought to

be sacred; but no matter what promise, what oath they may force from me, remember—"

A flood of tears interrupted the sentence; but he quickly resumed.

"You see me affected and unhappy, Laura. Can I be otherwise, in quitting you and these little ones?"

"Ah!" exclaimed I, "you do not tell me all—you conceal something from me!"

"True, Laura; and yet the day is perhaps not distant when all my secrets will be revealed. And then, all your goodness of heart and your love for me may scarcely be enough to obtain my pardon."

"What do you say?" exclaimed I. "Your pardon! You, my benefactor, my beloved, my only friend! The most generous, the best of human beings!"

"Hold, Laura! Do not profane those titles, which belong only to virtue. You will one day know my fault. It will appear to you, as I see it myself, inexcusable, enormous! Oh, Laura! my only hope is in your affection. That may perhaps plead for me, and you may forgive me still. Listen to me! I have sworn to respect and to obey the commands of my father, for I hold them sacred while he lives; but the world holds no other woman for me but you, Laura. These are our children, and no power on earth can wholly sever me from you and them!"

These words were followed by silent embraces, in which we all partook. He mounted his horse at length, and galloped off; but he often stopped on the road to look back and wave his hand, and more than once it appeared to me that he struggled with himself, and overpowered the feeling that seemed to urge his return.

It may be imagined in what misery I passed the remainder of this day. The children had been above an hour in bed, and I still sat without any light, but that of the moon, which shone fitfully into the drawing-room, through the glass doors that opened into the lawn. I looked mournfully on every object around me. My eyes wandered towards the rising ground in the shrubbery, and were fixed on the cross so often mentioned, when I suddenly observed a female figure, walking

among the trees with a majestic air. She made two or three turns round the lawn, and then disappeared.

I was greatly agitated. This circumstance instantly produced a strange and superstitious dread. In many parts of Sicily there is a belief that the phantom of some female is sure to announce the death of any distinguished individual. I had heard of this notion, but never felt its force till now. It could in my sensation have no object but Lord L——; and I was tortured by the fear that he might be attacked by one of those pestilential fevers which at that time made such ravages in Dublin, or that the vessel in which he was to embark there, might be lost. But a letter from Wales, in a few days afterwards, told me he was safe from all my imagined dangers, and that before I received it he would be at his father's side.

By degrees I became calm, but I could not recover my happiness. Not all the sweet endearments of my children, nor Lord L——'s delightful letters, had power to lessen my melancholy. I became nervous to the highest degree, and the least noise terrified me. Hannah lectured me continually; but in vain.

"Why, one would think," she used to say, "that my lord had never gone to England before. Ar'n't you ashamed of yourself, Miss Laura, not to hould up. It's all nonsense taking on this way."

"My dear Hannah," was my usual reply, "I do all I can, but it is useless. Something is going to happen to him. I shall never see him again!"

One morning, after I had been for some weeks suffering under this wretched apprehension, Hannah came into the little oratory, and found me stretched insensible upon the floor. When her efforts had restored me, I pointed to a letter which lay beside me, and answered her inquiries by making signs to her to read it. It was written in an elegant female hand, and contained the following words.

"If you are not quite abandoned, this letter will not be written in vain. They say that your errors arise from ignorance rather than a bad heart. I will believe it when you have escaped from your vicious course of

life, and broken your shameful connexion with the man who never can be yours. If, in spite of all honour and principle, you work on him through the absurd passion you have inspired, to form a connexion with you, which would be ruin and disgrace to him, reflect that besides ensuring to yourself eternal perdition, you will cause the death of the respectable and doting parent whom such a marriage would send to his grave."

On reading these cruel words, Hannah had no command of herself. She tore the letter in pieces, and stamped on them as they fell on the ground.

"I am wrong," said she, in a voice hoarse with passion, while she picked up the scraps of paper, "my lord must see these—he will know the hand, and *his own* will fall heavy on them that did it!"

Turning towards me, and seeing my state of suffering, pity took place of rage. She used every possible effort to soothe me, said that the letter was written by some wretch envious of my happiness, and that such a paper should be treated with contempt. All was too late! the whole truth seemed to flash on me at once. A crowd of past thoughts and circumstances rushed on my mind. I heard poor Hannah's kind words without attending to their meaning. I saw her tears without being affected by them. I felt her hand pressing mine to her lips, but mine hung motionless. At last I interrupted her.

"Hannah," said I, "you are my sincere friend, you have never deceived me: a word from your lips is worth a thousand sermons. If then you can, in truth and conscience, tell me that I am not wrong, not criminal in living with him, I will believe you in preference to all the world—I will be happy!"

Hannah covered her eyes with her hands, and quitted the room, sobbing loudly.

It was then true that I was a guilty, degraded being—an object of contempt to all his family—to his father, dropping into the tomb! on recalling to my mind all the things that should have long before opened my eyes to the fact, I was astonished only at my blindness. This was then Lord L——'s secret, so vaguely hinted at on our

parting, the fault I had to forgive. Ah! how truly he was already forgiven! He loved me, that was *his* crime—and if a guilty mother—the shocking thought revolted me—it was, alas! true that the excess of her misery—but *he!* —he was a thousand times dearer to me than ever.

My first idea was to send him the letter. But that was soon abandoned, for I thought it too cruel to add the news of my unhappiness to that which he was already suffering on his father's account. I resolved to wait till his return to Castlerose, when I would frankly tell him the state of my mind, my remorse, and my plans for the future. On one point I meant to be inflexible—we should certainly *separate*, never again to inhabit the same roof. The thought was in itself despair—but the sacrifice should be made! Lord L—— should reside at Clermont; we should see each other only at intervals; every one should be satisfied as to my conduct and intentions; Lord L—— should be happy in the performance of his duty, and I should act up to mine, though utter misery were the consequence.

Night came on. A quiet sleep, during which I had none but consoling dreams, calmed in some measure the agitation of the day. I was awoke by two little voices, which said,

"Laura, are you asleep? Mamma, are you awake?"

They were well known voices! Hannah had given the strictest orders to the dear children to be very quiet when they paid me their usual morning visit. Perhaps she foresaw that from that day forward there was to be no further repose for their wretched mother!

The morning passed tranquilly over. In the afternoon the children begged of me to join, as was my custom, in their play; and, with a heavy heart I consented. We were soon seated on the carpet in the drawing room, the glass doors lying open, as the day was pleasantly warm. We were surrounded with toys of various kinds, and Laurette was busily employed *dressing* my hair, in her fashion, which consisted in putting it into the greatest disorder. I was aroused from the painful revery into which I had insensibly fallen, by a gentle tapping against the door; and turning sud-

denly round, I observed a lady, of middle age and of most dignified demeanour, who stood looking at the children.

I was a good deal embarrassed. The distinguished appearance of the lady was a strong contrast to the simplicity of my own. I was dressed in the plainest way; and my long brown hair was tossed about as I have described.

"Pray," said the stranger, "can I speak with the young Italian lady who lives here?"

I saw that she took me for the nursery maid, and I answered in a low and hesitating voice, "I am the person."

"You!" replied she, in an accent of surprise.

"I mean the mother of these children."

"It is I who am their mother, Ma'am."

At these words the lady's eyes filled with tears. She did not speak for some minutes; but then began to excuse herself for having entered so abruptly; and explained that having found no one in the offices, she took the path leading to the lawn, as her shortest way home. While she spoke, Frederick looked at her attentively. She held her hands out to him, and he ran to her unhesitatingly and kissed her, which surprised me, as he was timid with strangers.

"We know each other," said the lady; "I have often met him with his nurse."

These words told me at once to whom I spoke. I saw, for the first time, Lady Catherine H——, the aunt of Lord L——, and for whom I had for six years entertained such veneration, and so often longed to behold. I curtsied to the ground, and my looks were no doubt suited to the respect which prompted the action. She took me by the hand.

"Laura," said she, "I wish to speak to you quite alone."

This familiar appellation filled me with joy. I could not speak; but accepting her proffered hand, I pressed it to my heart, and led the way to the little oratory. She held my hand tenderly between hers, as I sat down beside her, and said affectionately, "My dear

Laura," but suddenly stopped, as if she hesitated how to continue.

"Ah, my dear Madam," exclaimed I, "you know not how happy you make me."

"I am nevertheless the messenger of ill," but seeing me grow deadly pale, she rapidly went on—"of ill which is but for a time, which your courage will soon surmount. Your candid and innocent air convinces me that I shall not implore you in vain—that the hope which brought me here will not be deceived. At once to relieve your suspense, and to speak to the purpose, I have long mourned over my nephew's errors; but seeing *you*, I pardon him from my heart. But what was at first a youthful indiscretion has grown to be a fatal passion, that forces him to drive to utter despair the father whose whole hopes are fixed on him. If my nephew had not abused your innocence in ceasing to respect it, if in degrading you he had not put an impassable barrier between you, there is no saying what sacrifices might not have been made by his family, in consideration of your amiable character and your uncommon beauty. But he has plunged you in guilt, against the laws of God and man. In keeping you profoundly ignorant of the true nature of your crime, he has loaded himself with all its responsibility;—but now that you are informed of what that is, that you know your situation, it falls again upon you. If you still persevere to live with a man, in violation of all that is virtuous and honourable, can you believe yourself innocent? No, no, the primitive simplicity of your heart will loudly answer the question; and you will, by one prompt though painful sacrifice, redeem your fault. Laura, it is in your power to do infinite good or serious evil—you have the choice before you!"

She paused from her discourse, and seemed to wait the impression produced by this mixture of all that could work upon my feelings. Overpowered, and almost breathless, I asked, tremblingly, what was required of me?

"To quit Ireland for a little while—to return to Sicily," replied Lady Catherine.

My answer was a cry of agony—my eyes closed—I lost all sense of sight, hearing and speech, and sank on the floor. The cruel woman who bent over me, recalled me to sensation, by all that could soothe and flatter me. As I regained some command of myself, she pictured the heroism and devotion of the course she advised. She spoke of the dying earl. "It is he who appeals to you," said she; "will you, can you be deaf to his expiring voice? You know his writing—look at this letter!"

I gazed on the paper, while she read as follows—

"I had two sons, from whom I expected all the happiness of my life. One has hastened my death, the other is about to plunge me into the grave. Speak to the heart of this young woman. They say, that in spite of her disgraceful course, she is susceptible of good feeling. She will carry with her into her native country, ample proofs of my gratitude, ample provision for an honourable life, and the blessings of an old man on her head. If she resists my supplications, and remains, she will be the mark of opprobrium, and the final cause of my death."

"It is enough, it is enough!" cried I, impetuously. "It is *my* duty to die! Oh, this cruel father, to write such words as these! For me, who so much respected, who would have so much honoured him. Alas, I knew not it was a crime to love his son! No one told me that it was so. At least explain this to the earl, tell him I offended without knowing my offence—that I will not persist in my error—I will go away, far from the place, far from Lord L——. The moment he returns here I will tell him my determination, but it is from my own lips he shall know it."

"No, no, Laura, you will better consult his happiness, if he be dear to you."

"*If* he be dear to me! Oh, Heavens!"

"You will give me the strongest proof of your affection, in sparing him a scene of wretchedness, which could only add to the misery of each. He will feel, and esteem this last sacrifice at its full value. I have so far only spoken to you of your duty towards God,

and of the rights of a venerable parent. But if I turned to your own well-being! Think, for a moment, when Lord L—— sees his father dead before him, and his passion for you becomes suddenly extinct—when he ceases to love her whom he cannot even now—"

"But he tells me he will love me for ever."

"And believes it, perhaps—but he deceives himself."

"And you are sure he will end by hating me?"

"By ceasing to love you, certainly. I am quite convinced that in a year or two—"

"A year or two of happiness! Oh, that I could but see him for a day—for a single moment!"

"But by sincerely repenting, and returning to a virtuous course, you will become, in his eyes, as well as those of his family, a most respectable and interesting woman."

"But these children on whom he doats—how could he bear never to see *them* again?"

At this question, which plainly told how little I knew the woe that was intended for me, Lady Catherine appeared for a moment overcome. She paused; but soon recovered herself, and in a tone of cruel firmness she spoke the most afflicting words I had ever heard.

"Your children must remain in Ireland. I say nothing of the law, which in such a case adjudges them to their father: it is to your affection for them, as their mother, that I shall speak. In one word, Laura, recollect how *you* were brought up; and appreciate the motives of those who, for your children's sake, have taken the painful task of this afflicting affair."

I lost all power of reason and reflection. I never paused to consider my own rights, my own authority. I felt myself in the hands of a merciless enemy. I threw myself at her feet, clasped her knees, and in the most abject terms implored that my children might be left to me. I offered to fly with them to the remotest corner of the land, to hide myself impenetrably from Lord L——, to bury myself wholly from the world. But instead of being moved by my agony, she summoned all her severity of look and tone, and said,

"Your fate is in your hands. I cannot force you. A

special messenger waits for my reply to the earl. His life or death depends on it. I shall tell him you are inflexible—Farewell!"

She rose, as if to depart. I threw myself before, to intercept her, and caught her dress in my hands. She sat down again, looked at me firmly, but harshly no longer. Her countenance changed into an expression of calmness and dignity. She spoke once more, accompanying every word with caresses that would have succeeded to subjugate a harder heart than mine. She brought forward all the particulars of my situation, in the most vivid manner. She painted the death-bed of the earl, his son's despair, a whole family in misery—myself the object of general execration! On the other hand, she showed me my children growing up in all the advantages of education and good breeding, reunited to me, loading me with blessings for the part I had acted; and their father viewing me with respect and gratitude, and an affection, not less ardent, but far purer than what he had ever before felt for me.

I was overcome, overpowered, unresisting—my solemn pledge was given! But when I pronounced the fatal word, it seemed as if the whole universe had ceased to exist. Lady Catherine hastened away. Her last words were a promise to send her carriage for me next day, and to take me to Clermont Hall, to settle every thing relative to the children.

She had no sooner left the room than Hannah entered, having overheard every thing that had passed. I cannot detail the scene that followed, nor the various efforts made by this excellent creature to assuage my suffering. All was ineffectual; every word of intended condolence turned into bitterness, for each one confirmed the conviction of my guilt and the necessity of the sacrifice.

The night which followed this dreadful day was still more terrible. During the continuance of daylight I had been kept up by the violence of my emotion, and the energy of despair. The struggle against my feelings while the children were with me, supported me, in a measure, even after they had retired, and as they

slept. But by degrees every support seemed gradually to abandon me; and, as the silent night fell in, I wandered up and down through the cottage, at length uttering such piercing cries that the children awoke, and all the servants hurried to my assistance. But Hannah removed the children to her own room, and I desired the others to leave me, which they did with tears.

I could not be persuaded to lie down, I still wandered about the sitting-room, and I recalled all that had passed in review before me. A new light seemed to break suddenly upon my mind, as I reconsidered some of the incoherent reasonings of Hannah; and I thus asked myself—"Do I not go too far in this blind submission? Do I not owe to myself, my children, and their father, another course of conduct? Yes, yes, Hannah is right. No one living has the right to force me from this place but Lord L——: I am free!"

"No, you are not!" replied a deep and solemn voice, which I instantly recognised. I raised my head, and by the faint light of the night-lamp, I saw the venerable figure of the old priest, whom I had but once before beheld.

"Ah! I am lost!" screamed I, covering my face with my hands.

"Far from it, poor creature," said he; "you are recovered from the path that was leading to destruction."

These words were spoken in a tone of perfect exultation. I cast a mournful look toward the priest; his face beamed with joy; whether it was excited for a sinner redeemed, or a proselyte gained, I know not now. At the time, however, I viewed him in the most reverential light, and I listened to his reasoning, agreed with his opinions, and joined in his prayers, as though he had imparted a portion of his spirit to mine. And what was the burthen of all *our* invocations to Heaven? Flight from, and abandonment of, all that was dear to me on earth! For strength to bear this, for grace to succeed in it, I bent my knee, and raised my voice, and poured out my soul! Was it not impiety on my part? What heart will call it less?—But on whom do I call?

Who is there now to answer or to feel for me? As the priest left me about dawn, a kind of lethargic slumber closed my eyes, and took from me all sensation of my wretchedness.

The morning was far advanced when I awoke, and saw the sun shining full into my room, and upon the empty beds of my children. Starting up, I called loudly upon Hannah, who was watching me close by, and was in a moment beside me.

"They are safe, my dear mistress," exclaimed she; and she beckoned them from the next room, where they waited the summons. I will not attempt to depict my suffering during the course of this day, as I gazed on my darlings, and listened to their unconscious prattle, and stifled my sighs, repressed my tears, and played with them till my heart grew sick with anguish. After dinner we were again *at play*; all the toys were brought forth, I took them one after another in my hand, and kissed them separately, scarce knowing what I did. The children hung round me, covered me with caresses, and seemed sensible that some secret load pressed upon my heart.

Hannah suddenly entered the room, and with a faltering voice told me I was wanted. I hastily sprang up, embraced the children wildly, threw on my cloak and bonnet, and relieved by this escape from sensations which were becoming intolerable, I entered the carriage that was waiting for me at the door. A respectable looking woman stood at the steps, and as I entered, she said something on the part of her mistress, which I did not comprehend. As the carriage drove away, all my servants stood at the door, and Hannah held the children, one in each hand. A general expression of sorrow was painted on every face, except on those of the little cherubs, who smiled upon me, and waved their little hands till I was out of sight.

"We are going to Clermont Hall?" asked I of my companion who sat opposite to me.

"Certainly, Ma'am," answered she.

The rapid movement of the carriage, joined to my great anxiety, began to affect me sensibly. My head

turned round, and my senses were beginning to wander from all the reality of my situation, when the carriage stopped before the principal entrance of the stately mansion, which I recognized for Clermont Hall. All that I further recollect, is, that the great door opened; a tall female figure, which I believe to have been that of Lady Catherine, came down the steps, and entered the carriage; then embraced me several times, in great apparent emotion, without however raising the long white veil that covered her head; quitted the carriage in the same silence she had observed while in it, and the horses set off instantly at full gallop. We travelled all night with the same frightful rapidity; and the next morning about day-break, I was placed on board a vessel, at what port I know not. There my female companion left me, in the care of the captain's wife, an amiable and kind woman, who has from the first moment, done all in her power to calm my anguish, and lessen the cruelty of my lot.

I have been now three weeks at sea. Ireland is far behind; yet I gaze, night and day, towards the west, as if——I cannot pursue the thought. In a ship I first knew what happiness was; and *now!* Completing this recital, has been my only support; without it I should have gone mad. Will it ever meet *his* eyes, or those of my dear children?

Once more on my native soil—once more in Sicily! But where are my early feelings, my innocent enjoyments, my happy ignorance! I am a week on shore! I landed in *my own* bay. The objects of infant recollection all burst on me at once. The whole neighbourhood hurried to the shore, to see the strangers, and inquire what could bring a foreign vessel there in fine weather. I marked several well-known faces: men who bore little marks of change, women of advanced age scarcely altered; girls grown into women, *married* ones, too, with their children by their side; but no one recognized me!

At length, as I made my way through the groups, leaning on the captain's and his lady's arms, and tracing, according to their instructions, our way to the monastery of the White Penitents, a woman pressed quickly forward, and came directly up to me. Her features were agitated, and all her movements convulsive. I shrunk away: the people around endeavoured to remove her; but she pushed them aside; and, stopping before me, she looked at me with a frightful gaze of joy. A torrent of tears burst from her eyes, she wrung her hands, and with a smothered utterance, she exclaimed—

"Yes, it is *she!* But where is the beauty of which I was so proud—for the price of which I bartered my immortal soul! Where are the beams of her eyes, the roses of her cheeks? Thy brother is dead, Laura! Dost thou come to reproach me with another crime? Wouldst thou, too, die, to add to my load of guilt?"

These words of my wretched mother were too much for my exhausted frame. I sank into the arms of the captain; and when I recovered my recollection, I found myself in the detached house belonging to the monastery, adapted for the reception of travellers of either sex. The captain and his wife sat by me, and with them a young man, whose dress proclaimed him to be one of the monks. Among the first words addressed to me by the captain's lady, I comprehended these,

"Father Anselm has taken charge ——"

At the sound of this name, I started from the bed on which they had placed me. I threw aside my hair, and looked into the face of the young man. I had not long to look. His eyes answered mine. I was in an instant in the arms of that dear-loved brother, whom our frenzied parent had fancied to have perished in the waves; but who lived to cover his penitent sister with the protection of the sacred calling, which grief for her loss had prompted him to adopt as his.

Thus one spark of hope is still alive; one link to bind me to existence. Yet nature seems dead for me. I wander on this beach from daybreak to sunset, my gaze for ever fixed towards the side where I fancy Ire-

land to be. I stroll through the forest to the spot where I first met him. I meet happy girls, gathering flowers, as gay, as thoughtless, as I was at their age. May my bitter tears at least be not lost for them—may my example be a lesson! All that I possess shall be employed to give portions to the poorest among them. The death which I sigh for will sanctify this gift. My brother knows my wishes. He knows where I desire my grave to be dug—in the same spot where first ———. And if ever it should chance that he ——— and my children, my dear, dear children! ———

But, gracious Heaven, give me strength! What do I see?—Even now—within the bay—a vessel—it *is* the English flag—it *is* ———.

The recital ended here.

The following particulars were added by Father Anselm, in our conversation before alluded to.

No sooner had Laura thrown down the pen that traced the last broken sentence of her manuscript, than she ran from her room, quitted the monastery with almost frantic speed, and hurried to the sea-side. The vessel which she had so suddenly seen, as it swept round a projecting rock, and entered the bay, was indeed none other than the well-known yacht which had borne her from her native shore six years previously. It had anchored in the smooth shelter of the bay; and before Laura could reach the water's edge, a boat had been lowered, and was rapidly rowed towards the shore. Five human figures stood close together on the prow. A young man, with two children, one in each hand; another man, elderly and respectable-looking; and a woman, of nearly middle age. Must their names be told? Did Laura require the explanation? Did the waving hats, the extended arms, the cheering calls of all that was most dear to her, speak to the inmost depths of her heart? And when *he* springs far across the surf upon the beach, and clasps her in his arms—when the little innocents wade through the water, and grasp their mother's knees—when the warm-souled Hannah and the faithful O'Brien join the group—has

that heart *broken* with excess of joy?—No! It has sunk, but to rise again. The spring of being has relaxed, but to regain new force. The film flies from before her sight; the weight is removed from her brain, and the beams of pleasure struggling through the mist of woe, bathe all around them in a radiant flood. A joyous discharge of artillery, and a cheer of honest Irish delight, came across the waves, and the rocks rung with the sound, as Laura flung herself into the new earl's open arms, for the father of Lord L——— was dead. His mortal career closed before he could learn the misery of her, whose sacrifice was meant to secure his peace of mind, if not to save his life. Hannah, with the faithful energy of her nation, lost not one hour when she knew the baseness that entrapped her mistress; but fled with the children to the coast. The servants and tenants, who adored Lord L——— and Laura, aided her flight with means of every kind; and she reached London the day after the old earl was laid in his tomb. His son started from his trance of filial grief, spurned all the spurious offerings to his new honours, and with Hannah, and O'Brien, and the children, he hastened to a sea-port where his yacht was lying ready, at a minute's notice, for sea, with others of the club of which he was a leading member.

He was, within an hour, upon the waves; and all that skill and vigilance could do was exerted to hasten his voyage to Sicily.

As soon as their minds became composed enough to allow of aught but bursts of unreasoning rapture, the hands of the lovers were joined together, and their hearts legitimately bound, by Laura's brother, in the monastery chapel. But to make the union legal as well as legitimate, still more was to be done. They set out immediately for Rome, where *all* forms were in due course gone through; and Laura Pemegia became the unquestionable sharer of the title, fortune, and honours of him, who could not by any ritual have given or gained another grain of heart. If the spirit of the former earl looks down on the scenes of earth, and is conscious of this world's felicities, it may be satisfied with

the son who made the generous, the just, the *only* amends in the power of man, to the being who trusted and sacrificed all, in him and for him.

From the year of their marriage until this they have lived abroad; both of them the charm and grace of some of the best society of the continent. The earl is *afraid* to return to England, not for his own sake, but for *hers*. For he dreads lest some exclusive *clique*, that gives the tone to fashion and apes the mockery of morals, might refuse to his always innocent, though long deluded Laura, the fiat of admission to those circles, where many a heartless guilty one takes place not far from the highest.

Another bar exists to the earl's return, and joins in depriving Ireland of his personal support, at all times wanting, but most of all in times like these. His eldest boy is illegitimate, without rank, or title, or patrimony; while a brother, born several years later, is the lucky, legal, "true inheritor" of all. The earl has, like his helpmate, ever doated on Frederick. The boy had nothing left but to *make* himself a name—a fortune, his father's affection has secured to him. And, *even while I write*, I see that name amongst the very first of those who, as volunteers in the Russian ranks, struck the earliest blows on the Turkish soil, against the pest of humanity, the butchers of Greece, the race, whose expulsion from the civilized world would sanctify excess itself, and form a grand exception to general rules of politics, expediency, and international law.

The unfortunate mother of Laura, conscience-maddened, was at the time of my visit wandering about, watched by the care of her son. She obeyed him, as has been seen, but still believed him dead; as well as Laura, whose spectre seemed to haunt her. This last idea was firmly strengthened by seeing so constantly near her the marble statue in the wood, which had been executed at Rome, under the earl's inspection, and sent by him to Sicily, to be placed in the very spot where he first met its beautiful original. To general observers it was a monument of loveliness. To a guilty mother a record of crime, and a signal for remorse and misery.

Hannah and old O'Brien retain their places, not only in the service and the regard, but—the former more especially—in the hearts of their master and mistress; and fidelity, sown on a generous soil, has produced a full harvest of gratitude.

Father Anselm still lives in his cloister, in the mild enjoyment of a virtuous mind. His written communications with his sister are frequent, and, as I have reason to believe, among her truest gratifications. Little Laurette is by this time a full grown girl; and may soon, as I understand, be in a fair way to give some future writer occasion to say as much for a daughter of *hers*. For a treaty is even now going on for her union with a young German of noble family; and consequently Laura Pemegia, who was introduced to the reader as a child of fourteen, has a chance of becoming a grandmother before four and thirty.

THE

CONFESSIONS

OF

AN ENGLISH GLUTTON.

Puisque les choses sont ainsi, je prétends aussi avoir mon franc-parler. D'ALEMBERT.

THIS is confessedly the age of confession—the era of individuality—the triumphant reign of the first person singular. Writers no longer talk in generals. All their observations are bounded in the narrow compass of self. They think only of number one. *Homo sum* is on the tip of every tongue and the nib of every pen, but the remainder of the sentence is unuttered and unwritten. The rest of his species is now nothing to any one individual. There are no longer any idiosyncrasies in the understanding of our essayists, for one common characteristic runs through the whole range. Egotism has become as endemical to English literature as the plague to Egypt, or the scurvy to the northern climes. Every thing is involved in the simple possessives *me* and *mine* —and we all cry out in common chorus,

> "What shall I do to be for ever known,
> And make the age to come mine own?"

Since, then, the whole tribe of which I am an unworthy member, have one by one poured out their souls into the confiding and capacious bosom of the pub-

lic; since the list of scribblers, great and small, from the author of Eloise to the inventor of Vortigern—since the Wine-drinker, the Opium-eater, the Hypochondriac, and the Hypercritic, have in due succession "told their fatal stories out," I cannot, in justice to my importance, or honesty to the world, leave the blank unfilled, which stands gaping to receive the Confessions of a Glutton, and thus put the last leaf on this branch of periodical personality.

I have one appalling disadvantage beside my contemporaries, in that want of sympathy which I am sure to experience from readers in general. Many a man will be too happy to acknowledge himself hypochondriacal —it is the fashion. Others are to be found in great abundance who will bravely boast of their spongy intemperance, and be proud of their brotherhood with the drunkard. Even opium-eating, like snuff-taking, may come into vogue, and find unblushing proselytes—but who will profess himself a slave to gluttony—the commonest failing of all? Nevertheless, with all the chances of public odium and private reprobation impending over me, I hasten to the performance of my duty, and I am proud to consider myself a kind of literary Curtius, leaping willingly into the gulf, to save my fellow-citizens by my own sacrifice.

The earliest date which I am able to affix to the development of *my* propensity, is the month of August, 1764, at which period, being then precisely two years and two months old, I remember well my aunt Griselda having surprised me in infantine but desperate excess, for which she punished me with a very laudable severity. This circumstance made a great impression on me; and without at all lessening my *propensity*, added considerably to my prudence. My voracity was infinite, and my cunning ran quite in a parallel line. I was

"Fox in stealth, wolf in greediness."

I certainly eat more than any six children, yet I was the very picture of starvation. Lank, sallow, and sorrow-stricken, I seemed the butt against which stinginess had been shooting its shafts. I attacked every one I

met with the most clamorous cries for cakes or bread. I watched for visitors, and thrust my hands into their pockets with most piteous solicitings; while aunt Griselda bit her lips for anger, and my poor mother, who was a different sort of person, used to blush to the eyes for shame, or sit silently weeping, as she contemplated the symptoms of my disgraceful and incurable disease. In the mean time every thing was essayed, every effort had recourse to, to soften down the savageness of my rage for food, or at least to turn what I eat to good account. I was pampered and crammed, with my increasing years, like a Norfolk turkey---I had an unlimited credit at the pastry-cook's shop, and the run of the kitchen at home, but in vain. The machinery of my stomach refused to perform its functions. I think I must have swallowed every thing the wrong way, or have been unconsciously the prey of an interminable intestine war; for every article of sustenance took, as it were, a peculiar and perpendicular growth, but never turned into those lateral folds of flesh, which produce the comfortable clothing of men's ribs in general. At fourteen years of age I was five feet ten inches high, covered almost entirely with the long hair that boys come home with at the Christmas holidays from a Yorkshire cheap academy, my bones forcing their way through my skin, and my whole appearance the fac-simile of famine and disease: yet I never had a complaint, except not getting enough to eat.

I am thus particular as to my appearance at this period, in the hope, that by this exposure of an unvarnished portrait, I may excite some commiseration for sufferings, which did not proceed from my own wicked will. I was constitutionally a glutton: nature had stamped the impress of greediness upon me at my birth, or before it. In the sucking tenderness of infancy, and the upshooting of boyhood, it was the preponderating characteristic of my nature—no self-begot habit, growing on by little and little, fostered by indulgence, and swelled out, until it became too large for the constitution that enshrined it, like those geese livers which are expanded by a particular preparation, until they be-

come, as a body might say, bigger than the unhappy animals to which they belong. Will you not then, reader, grant me your compassion for my inadvertent enormities? Must I look in vain for the sympathising tear of sensibility falling to wash out the scorching errors of invincible appetite—as forcible at least as the invincible ignorance of heresy, for which even there is hope in the semi-benignant bosom of the church? To you I appeal, ye cooks by profession—ye gormandizers by privilege—to the whole board of aldermen—to the shade of Mrs. Glass, Dr. Kitchiner, and the rest of the list of gastronomical literati, who, in teaching the world the science of good living, must have some yearnings, one would think, for those victims whom ye lead into the way of temptation.

But lest this unsupported appeal to the melting charities of mankind might be ineffectual in its naked exhibition, I shall proceed to cover it with a short detail of some of the particular horrors to which I have been a prey for upwards of half a century, and I think it must be a hard heart that will then refuse me its pity, and a ravenous maw that will not involuntarily close, to shut out the possibility of suffering like mine.

Up to the age of fifteen, when I presented the appearance faintly sketched above, I may be considered to have gone on mechanically gormandizing, with nothing to distinguish my way of doing so from that common animal appetite which is given, in different proportions, to all that creep, or walk, or swim, or fly. Those vulgar gluttonies, this eating for eating-sake, unconnected with mental associations, have no interest and no dignity. A man who supplies instinctively his want of food, without choice of taste, is truly *Epicuri de grege porcus*, or may be compared rather to the *Porcus Trojanus* of the ancients, a wild boar stuffed with the flesh of other animals—a savoury, punning parody upon the Trojan horse. Such a man is no better than a digesting automaton—a living mass of forced-meat—an animated sausage.

I was sent home from six successive schools, on various pretences; but the true reason was, that inordi-

nate craving which no indulgence could satisfy. I eat out of all proportion; and my father was obliged to take me entirely to himself. My mother was miserable, but of inexhaustible generosity; my aunt Griselda was dead, and I had no check upon me. Doctors from all parts were consulted on my case. Innumerable councils and consultations were held, ineffectually, to ascertain whether that refrigeration of stomach, which they all agreed was the primal cause of my malady, was joined with dryness, contraction, vellication, or abstersion. They tried every remedy and every regimen, without success. The fact was, I wanted nothing but food, for which they would have substituted physic: so that between my mother and my doctors, I had both in abundance—and for the mind as well as the body. The Τυχης Ιατρειον was plentifully supplied me by my father, for I had natural parts, and loved reading. But the whole turn of my studies was bent towards descriptions of feasts and festivals. I devoured all authors, ancient or modern, who bore at all upon my pursuit. Appetite, mental as well as bodily, grew by what it fed on; and I continually chewed, as it were, the cud of my culinary knowledge. I rummaged Aristophanes for the Grecian repast, and thumbed over Macrobius and Martial for the Roman. While seizing on every delicacy within my reach, I feasted my imagination with dainties not to be got at—the Phrygian attican, Ambracian kid, and Melian crane. I revered the memory of Sergius Arata, who, we are told by Pliny, was the inventor of oyster-beds; of Hortensius, the orator, who first used peacock at supper; of Vitellius, Apicius, and other illustrious Romans,

"Their sumptuous gluttonies and gorgeous feasts."

These classical associations refined my taste, and seemed to impart a more acute and accurate power to my palate. As I began to feel their influence, I blushed for the former grossness of my nature, and shrunk from the common gratification to which I had been addicted. I felt an involuntary loathing towards edibles of a mean and low-lived nature. I turned with disgust

from the common casualties of a family dinner, and began to view with unutterable abhorrence shoulders of mutton, beef and cabbage, and the like. A feeling, I should rather say a *passion*, (the technical phrase at present for every sensation a little stronger than ordinary), a passion seemed to have taken possession of my mind for culinary refinement, dietic dainties—the *delicata fercula*, fit only for superior tastes, but incomprehensible to the profane. A new light seemed breaking in upon me; a new sense, or at least a considerable improvement on my old sense of tasting, seemed imparted to me by miracle. My notions of the dignity of appetite became expanded; I no longer looked on man as a mere masticating machine, the butcher and sepulchre of the animal world. I took a more elevated view of his powers and properties, and I felt as though imbued with an essence of pure and ethereal epicurism, if I may so express myself—and why may I not!—my contemporaries would not flinch from the phrase.

My father was a plain sort of man—liked plain speaking, plain feeding, and so on. But he had his antipathies—and among them was roast-pig. Had he lived to our times, he might probably have been won over by a popular essay on the subject, which describes, in pathetic phrase, the manifold delights attending on that dish—the fat, which is no fat—the lean, which is not lean—the eyes melting from their sockets, and other tender touches of description. Be this as it may, my unenlightened parent would never suffer roast-pig upon his table, and so it happened, that, at sixteen years of age, I had never seen one. But on the arrival of that anniversary, I was indulged by my mother with a most exquisite and tender two-months porker, in all its sucking innocence, and succulent delight, as the prime dish in that annual birth-day feast, to which I was accustomed—in my own apartment—all doors closed—no ingress allowed—no intruding domestics—no greedy companions to divide my indulgences—no eyes to stare at me, or rob me of a portion of the pleasure with which I eat in, as it were, in vision, the spirit of every anticipated preparation, while savoury fragrance was

wafted to my brain, and seemed to float over my imagination in clouds of incense, at once voluptuous and invigorating. Ah, this is the true enjoyment of a feast! On the present occasion, I sat in the full glory of my solitude—sublimely individual, as the Grand Lama of Thibet, or the Brother of the Sun and Moon. The door was fastened—the servant evaporated—a fair proportion of preparatory foundation—soup, fish, &c.—had been laid in, *secundum artem*—the *mensa prima*, in short, was just despatched, when I gently raised the cover from the dish, where the beautiful porker lay smoking in his bright brown symmetry of form and hue, enveloped in a vapour of rich deliciousness, and floating in a gravy of indescribable perfection! After those delightful moments of dalliance (almost dearer to the epicure than the very fulness of actual indulgence) were well over—after my palate was prepared by preliminary inhalements of the odorous essence—I seized my knife and fork, and plunged *in medias res*. Never shall I forget the flavour of the first morsel—it was sublime! But oh! it was, as I may say, the last; for losing, in the excess of over-enjoyment, all presence of mind and management of mouth, I attacked, without economy or method, my inanimate victim. It was one of my boyish extravagances to conform myself in these my solitary feasts to the strict regulations of Roman custom. I began with an egg, and ended with an apple, and flung into the fire-place (as there was no fire, it being the summer season) a little morsel, as an offering to the *dii patellarii*. On this occasion, however, I forgot myself and my habits—I rushed, as it were, upon my prey—slashed right and left, through crackling, stuffing, body, and bones. I flung aside the knife and fork—seized in my hands the passive animal with indiscriminate voracity—thrust whole ribs and limbs at once into my mouth—crammed the delicious ruin by wholesale down my throat, until at last my head began to swim—my eyes seemed starting from their sockets—a suffocating thickness seemed gathering in my throat—a fulness of brain seemed bursting through my skull—my veins seemed swelled into gigantic magnitude—I lost all reason

and remembrance, and fell, in that state, fairly under the table.

This, reader, is what we call, in common phrase, a surfeit. But what language may describe its consequences, or give a just expression to the sufferings it leaves behind? The first awakening from the apoplectic trance, as the lancet of the surgeon gives you a hint that you are alive, when the only taste upon the tongue—the only object in the eye—the only flavour in the nostril, is the once-loved, but now deep-loathed dish! The deadly sickening with which one turns, and twists, and closes one's lids, and holds one's nose, and smacks one's lips—to shut out, and stifle, and shake off the detested sight, and smell, and taste:—but in vain, in vain, in vain! But let me not press the point. Forty-two years have passed since that memorable day—forty thousand recollections of that infernal pig have flashed across my brain, and fastened on my palate, and fumigated my olfactories; and there they are, every one, as fresh—what do I say?—a million times more fresh and intolerable than ever! Faugh!—It comes again.

But if such were some of the local and particular waking miseries of my excess, what, oh, what tongue may give utterance to, what pen pourtray, the intolerable terrors of my *dreaming* hours? For many months of my protracted and painful re-establishment, I dreamt every night—not one respite for at least three hundred weary and wasting days—quotidian repetitions of visions, each one more hideous than the former. I dreamt, and dreamt, and dreamt—of what? Of pig—pig—pig—nothing but pig. Pork, in all its multiplied and multiform modifications, was ever before me. Every possible form or preparation into which imagination could convert the hated animal, was everlastingly dangling in my sight, running around me, pursuing and persecuting me, in all the aggravation of the most exaggerated monstrosities. The scenery which accompanied these animal illustrations was always in keeping with the sickening subject. Sometimes, as I began to doze away in the mellow twilight of an autumn's evening, or the frosty rarefaction of a winter's day, or a day in spring, it

was all one—a sudden expansion of vision has begun to open upon me; and be it remembered that I always fancied myself of Hebrew extraction, Abraham, or Joseph, or Isaac—a Rabanite or a Caraite, as the case might be—the high priest of the synagogue, or an old clothes-man; but in all cases a Jew, with every religious predilection and antipathy strong fixed in my breast. A sudden expansion of vision, I say, began to open upon me—vast wildernesses spread far around—rocks of tremendous aspect seemed topling from mountains of the most terrific elevation. The forms of the former were of the strangest fantasy, but all presented some resemblance to a boar's head; while the hills showed invariably, in their naked and barren acclivities, an everlasting sameness of strata, that presented the resemblance of veiny layers of pickled pork; and the monstrous flowers with which the earth was bespread were never ending representations of rashers and eggs! A sickness and faintness always began to seize upon me at these sights; and, turning my glances upwards, I was sure to see the clouds impregnated with fantastic objects, all arising out of associations connected with my antipathy and loathing. Gigantic hams were impending over my head, and threatening to crush me with their weight. My eyes sunk, and I caught the peaks of the horrid hills frizzled with the grinning heads, and pointed with the tusks of the detested animal. The branches of the trees were all at once converted to twisted and curling pig-tails. Atoms then seemed springing from the sand; they were soon made manifest in all the caperings and gambols of a litter of sucking gruntlings. They began to multiply—with what frightful celerity! The whole earth was in a moment covered with them, of all possible varieties of colours. They began to grow bigger, and instantaneously they gained dimensions that no *waking* eye can bring into any possible admeasurement. I attempted to run from them: they galloped after me in myriads, grunting in friendly discord, while magical knives and forks seemed stuck in their hams, as they vociferated in *their* way, "Come eat me, come eat me!" At other times I pursued them,

in the frenzy of my despair, endeavouring to catch them, but in vain; every tail was soaped, and as they slipped through my fingers they sent forth screams of the most excruciating sharpness, and a laugh of hideous mockery, crying in damnable chorus, "What a *bore!* what a *bore!*" "Bubble and squeak! Bubble and squeak!" with other punning and piggish impertinences of the same cut and pattern. Then, again, an individual wretch would contract himself to a common-sized hog, and, rushing from behind between my legs, scamper off with me whole leagues across the desert; then, gradually expanding to his former monstrous magnitude, rise up with me into the skies, that seemed always receding from our approach, and stretching out to an interminable immensity; when the horrid brute on which I was mounted would give a sudden kick and grunt, and fling me off; and I tumbled headlong down thousands of thousands of fathoms, till I was at length landed in a pig-stye, at the very bottom of all bottomless pits.

At other times I used to imagine myself suddenly placed in the heart of a pork-shop. In a moment I was assailed by the most overpowering streams of terrible perfume, the gravy of the fatal dish floating round my feet, and clouds of suffocating fragrance almost smothering me as I stood. On a sudden every thing began to move; immense Westphalian hams flapped to and fro, banged against my head, and beat me from one side of the shop to the other—huge flitches of bacon fell upon me, and pressed me to the ground, while a sea of the detestable gravy flowed in upon me, and over me. Then frightful pigs' faces joined themselves together, and caught me in their jaws;—when, called in by my shriek, which was the expected signal for their operations, three or four horrid-looking butchers rushed upon me, and, as a couple of them pinioned and held me down on my back, another stuffed me to choking with pork-pies, until I awoke more dead than alive.

Once, and once only, I had a vision connected with this series of suffering, which I must relate, from its peculiar nature, and as the origin of a popular hoax

long afterwards put upon the world. I dreamt one night, that preparations were making, on a most splendid scale, for my marriage with a very beautiful girl of our neighbourhood, to whom I was (whatever my readers may think) very tenderly attached. The ceremony was to take place, methought, in Canterbury cathedral. I was all at once seized with a desire to examine the silent solemnity of the Gothic pile. I entered, I forget how. A rich strain of music was poured from the organ-loft. A mellow stream of light flowed in through the stained glass of the windows. I was quite alone, and the most voluptuous tide of thought stole upon my mind. While I stood thus in the middle of the aisle, a distant door opened, and the bridal party entered. My affianced spouse, surrounded by a cluster of friends, glittering with brilliant ornaments, and glowing in beauty, approached me. I advanced to meet her, in unutterable delight; when, as I drew near, I saw that the appearance of every thing began to change. The pillars seemed suddenly converted to huge Bologna sausages; the various figures of saints and angels, painted on the windows, were altered into portraits of black porkers; the railings of the different enclosures took the curved form of spare-ribs; the walls were hung with pig-skin tapestry; the beautiful melody just before played on the organ, was followed by a lively and familiar tune, and a confusion of voices sung,

"The pigs they lie," etc.

while a discordant chorus of diabolical grunting, wound up each stanza. In the mean time the bride approached; but what horror accompanied her! The wreath of roses braided round her head, was all at once a twisted band of black-puddings. Hog's bristles shot out from the roots of what was so lately her golden hair; a thin string of sausages took place of her diamond necklace; her bosom was a piece of brawn; her muslin robe became a piebald covering of ham-sandwiches; her white satin shoes were kicked, oh, horror! off a pair of pettitoes; and her beautiful countenance—

swallow me, ye wild boars!—presented but the hideous spectacle, since made familiar to the public, under the figure of THE PIG-FACED LADY!!! Hurried on by an irresistible and terrible impulse, I rushed forward, though with loathing, to embrace her; when instantly the detested odour of the hateful gravy came upon me once more; the pillars of the cathedral swelled out to an enormous circumference, and burst in upon me with a loud explosion; the roof fell down with a fearful crash, and overwhelmed me with a shower of legs of pork and pease-pudding; while, in the agony of my desperation, I caught in my arms my hideous bride, whose deep-brown skin crackled in my embrace, as I pressed to my bursting bosom the everlasting fac-simile of *a roast pig!* —In after years I took a fit of melancholy enjoyment, in setting afloat the humbug of the pig-faced lady.

I will not press upon the reader the manifold miseries that attended upon subsequent surfeits, for a period of more than five-and-twenty years. From what I have feebly sketched, some notion may be conceived of the nature and extent of my disorder. I need not, therefore, dwell on the consequences of my second memorable excess, which took place on the occasion of my eating turtle-soup for the first time: The misery in this matter was more from fright than from repletion; for when, after the sacrifice of repeated helpings of calipash and calipee, I found my teeth immoveably stuck together—in the style which my city readers well understand—I was seized with the horrible conviction that I had got a locked-jaw. Imagination worked so powerfully on this occasion, that when I had pulled my mouth wide open, beyond even its natural capacity) (which is not trifling, believe me, reader), I sat for hours, roaring out for a dentist to punch in two or three of my front teeth, that I might get some sustenance introduced through a quill. Even when I perfectly recovered my senses, I was long before I could bear to sit a moment with my mouth shut, from the dread of a return of my imagined danger. Then came the *dreaming* again—the crawling tortoises; the clammy, glutinous liquid; the green fat—but enough of this!

Repeated sufferings like these broke in upon the crust of my constitution, if I may use the trope; so that when I became of age, and possessed of a good fortune without incumbrance, by the demise of my father, and the second marriage of my mother (who by that step forfeited her jointure, and with *it* every claim on my regard,) I was in appearance a middle-aged man, and in mind a septuagenary. I, like old Burton, had "neither wife nor children"—my early attachment—my beautiful neighbour—the prototype—spare me the repetition, reader!—but *she*, you know, *she*—the LADY was lost to me for ever!—She had but one failing, poor girl—nervousness, just then coming first into fashion; and she took it strongly into her head, that if she married me, I should play the part of the wolf with the Little Red Riding-Hood, and eat her up one night in bed. To avoid this unusual and uncomfortable consummation of our nuptials, she discarded my suit altogether, and I lost her for ever. To get over the effects of this blow, I resolved to look for consolation in the joys of foreign cookery. I determined to travel, and I did travel, in pursuit of what I never have been able to discover—the art of allaying an uncontrollable appetite. As for the love affair, I soon swallowed my grief.

I shall not enumerate my adventures in distant countries, nor detail my observations on objects foreign to my purpose. *Ne sutor ultra crepidam.* I shall therefore merely say, that having eaten frogs in France, macaroni at Naples, ollapodrida in Spain, opium in Turkey, camel's flesh in Egypt, horse-flesh in Arabia, elephant-flesh in India, cat's-flesh in China, and hog's-flesh—no, never, never after the affair of the pig—it was a slip of the pen—I returned to England to sit down to plain beef and mutton; convinced that I had come back to the real, healthy honest standard of good taste. In the broad interval, however, which I have jumped over so rapidly, I had many and many a visiting of direful consequence. At one time I fancied that I was doomed to die of starvation, and the excruciating agonies then endured from cholics and indigestions, (proceeding from my even more than natural efforts to eat up to the standard of

sufficiency,) beggar all description. On another occasion a horrid apprehension oppressed me, that I should one day—but how express myself in English? I cannot; and I should have been silent perforce, did not the *delicacies* of the French language come into my aid—that I should, one day, *me crever le ventre!* To guard against this expected calamity, I had a pair of stays made—yes, reader, I was the first of the dandies—the lacing and unlacing of which, before and after meals, was attended with torments more horrible than those pelting and pitiless showers imagined by Dante for the Gluttons of his Inferno.

I forget precisely how many years have elapsed since the exhibition of fat Lambert. It is enough to know, that I went to the show. I saw him—Would that I never had! Oh, Heavens! what agonies has that sight cost me! The by-standers who observed me as I entered the room, burst into a loud and involuntary laugh—and no blame to them; for never was there a more ludicrous contrast than Lambert was to me, and I to Lambert. I am six feet five inches and a half high in my stockings; extremely like Justice Shallow, only taller, "like to a man made after supper of cheese-parings, for whom the case of a treble hautboy would make a mansion;"—and, I will venture to say that the skeleton of the Irish giant, dressed in my habiliments, and its back turned, might be taken for my figure by my nearest acquaintance. You all remember, readers, what Lambert's figure was. I do, alas! at any rate!—The very instant I saw him, the notion struck me that I had become his second-self—his ditto—his palpable echo—his substantial shadow—that the observers laughed at our "double transformation," for he was become me at the same time that I was exhibiting as he then was—and, finally, that I was dying of excessive fat. The idea was like an electric shock, and in one moment I felt that the double identity was completed—that the metamorphosis of Salmacis and her lover was acted over again in the persons of myself and the fat man—that I, in short, was Lambert, and Lambert me! I shot out of the exhibition room—rushed into the street—quit-

ted the confines of the city—ran up towards Hampstead-hill—tried back again, and made off in the direction of the river, endeavouring in vain to shake off the horrid phantasm that had seized upon my mind. I darted along with lightning-speed; my long legs seemed to fling themselves out spontaneously, as if they no more belonged to me than Mazurier's do to him, yet I fancied that I crept with the pace of a tortoise—that my fat totally prevented my quicker motion—that I should be crushed to death between the hedges, the turnpikes, or the carriages that passed me—and thus I ran in the middle of the road, vociferating for assistance, fighting against the foul fiend, and followed by a crowd of draggle-tailed black-guards, till I reached the banks of the river, and saw myself reflected in the stream. Oh, Heavens! what a delightful sight was that!

"Then like Narcissus ——"

But I must leave the quotation unfinished, and come at last to a full stop; for I fear I am trenching upon the privilege—poaching upon the preserve—of some contemporary hypochondriac. If so, if any may have led the way in giving to the world, like me, their *real unexaggerated* confessions, I can only complain, with the modern poet who accused Shakspeare of forestalling his thoughts, that they, be they who they may, have very unhandsomely and plagiaristically anticipated my own original lucubrations. And now having fairly unbosomed my sins, if they are sins, I trust to receive from a grateful public, in whose interest alone have I compiled these sheets, the absolution which should always follow confession. Then, as is usual in these cases, having disgorged my over-loaded conscience, I may be allowed to return to my *old courses*—following in this the example of Cæsar, who, according to Cicero, *post cœnam vomere volebat, ideoque largius edebat.* Should any harsh hearer or rigorous reader be inclined to constrain the bowels of his compassion, and still deny me pardon, to him I beg to propose a question in the words

of our immortal bard, which he may answer the first time we meet at dinner,—

> —— "If little faults
> Shall not be wink'd at, how shall we stretch our eye,
> When capital crimes, chew'd, swallow'd and digested,
> Appear before us."

[Should the authors of any of the Confessions alluded to in the preceding paper, discover it to be a parody upon some of them, I am sure they will good-humouredly excuse it; and recollect that no imitation can be a more positive acknowledgment of the merits and popularity of a work, than the (would-be) gaiety of a burlesque.]

A

SABBATH IN LONDON.

An Englishman who has passed seven consecutive years on the continent, might be fairly reckoned an eighth "sleeper." His eyes have been open, 'tis true, but he has been virtually visionless—a wonder-seeking somnambulist—cheated by a dream of splendour and variety, but unblest by any "sober certainty of waking bliss," or actual reality of comfortable enjoyment. Comfort! how that word will come into the sentence in spite of me! It is hacknied, worn-out, threadbare: I know it is. But what then? Must I discard it on that account? Must I not speak the truth, because it is a truism? Must I not bask in the sunshine, because the sun has shone since the creation? Must I inly adore and idolize this word, but never utter it, like the Hebrew who closes his lips on the sacred syllables of the Cabala, uprising from his heart? It is in vain to think of baulking my fancy. I cannot write this paper without *comfort* being its staple, for I write it in the central sanctuary of happiness—in the *penetralia* of enjoyment—at home:—and with comfort and cleanliness for my *Dii Penates*, I freely grant to cavillers against commonplace the right of laughing at me.

The steam-boat, like a great sea-monster winging its way through the waters, bore me across the Channel in three hours, and disgorged me and a hundred other passengers on the Quay of Dover, one Saturday afternoon in the month of September last. The weather was calm, the sea smooth, the sun clear. Every thing, in short, conspired around the shores of England to

give the lie to those prattling impertinences which I had been latterly accustomed to, about eternal fogs, and clouds, and vapours. But on landing I was electrically struck by observing the compact and diminutive look of every thing. I had been so long surrounded by extravagant and disproportioned combinations, that the thrill of pleasure on touching the *solum natale* was for a moment checked. I shrunk, like Mimosa, at the touch of morality, or, by a plainer and better illustration, like a snail into its shell. But when I got fairly within the comfortable contraction, I was much more at my ease, and I experienced a relief as instantaneous as little Poucet must have enjoyed when he flung off the jack-boots of the Giant. I was at once reduced to my fitting scale and level, and an instant sufficed to make me appreciate the contrast of what I felt with what I had been feeling. I saw at a glance that all I had been so long accustomed to was unnatural and artificial; that the whole surface on which I had for years been floating, was swelled out beyond its due proportions; society puffed up, like the frog in the fable; bloated bubbles waiting only to be pricked to make them burst; and men, so many political Titans, waging war against Nature, and buried under the elements they are unable to wield.

These were rapid associations running down the chain of thought; yet all this, and much more, rushed on my mind, on looking at the short-set, small-windowed, narrow-doored, two-storied residences ranged on the Quay of Dover. Every thing which followed was qualified to strengthen this impression. The snug parlour in which I dined; the light carriage in which I placed myself to start for the metropolis; the narrow roads, compact inclosures, neat gardens, and natty cottages, as we rattled out of the town, all made me understand that I was no longer in Brobdignag. The very boots of the postilion taught me a lesson of humility.

It was evening when I quitted Dover. The sun was sinking behind the Kentish hills, throwing a rich glare on the hop-gardens—a million times more lovely than the vineyards of Italy or France; and he was covered as he went down by a huge cloud, its edges fringed

with his golden beams, and its broad shades throwing a solemnity on the effulgence of his descent. The full moon soon rose upon us, almost as bright as day; and with the beautiful country thus illuminated for me, and my heart penetrated with "a sacred and home-felt delight," I travelled the whole night, without closing my eyes. At five o'clock in the morning the carriage entered the yard of the Golden Cross. Every thing was still as we drove over Westminster-bridge and up Whitehall—no labourers of any kind to be seen. The repose seemed more than natural, but was not the less impressive on that account. It was quite unlike what I had remembered of a summer morning in London: but I believe it was the first *Sunday* morning I had been in the streets so early. By ten o'clock I had got rid of the discomforts consequent on three nights' travelling—had given vent to my admiration of the comparative cleanliness of this inelegant inn with the state of the most magnificent foreign hotel—and had finished my breakfast of tea and French bread, as they call those rolls, which are, by the way, as like *French* bread, as some other necessaries of life, which the French call *à l'Anglaise*, are like *their* originals. I then sallied out to pay several visits, where I hoped to make some fine experiments of the effects of a pleasant surprise.

I proceeded towards Grosvenor-Square, and stepping up to the door of an old chum of mine, I raised the brazen visage that served for a knocker, and struck a blow, strong and heavy, with that ponderous implement. The sound reverberated through the house, answered by the cheerless echoes of emptiness. A woman, however, came out into the area below, and cried shrilly,

"What the devil d'ye make that noise for, d'ye hear? could'nt you ring the bell, eh? What d'ye want?"

Rough manners, thought I, but this is English independence, which levels ranks and soars above distinctions of sex. "Why, mistress, I want your master, by your leave."

"Do you, indeed! an' you want him, e'en go and look him out near Norwich, d'ye hear?"—and muttering something, God knows what, but certainly

nothing civil, she retired into the passage, and I lost her—perhaps for ever. I comprehended perfectly that my friend T. was down at his place in Norfolk, for the partridge-shooting; but I was sadly puzzled to know the meaning of his house-keeper's want of ceremony. I looked at myself right and left, saw that my coat was good, a watch in my fob, and various other indications of gentility, all as they should be; but my English readers will scarcely credit, that it was three hours afterwards before sundry such receptions reminded me that a single knock at the door was an official announcement that the hand which struck it was plebeian; and that all ranks are now-a-days dressed so much alike, that the man who has not the dandy knack of tying his cravat, may vainly hope to escape being occasionally confounded with his servant.

Several other attempts had the same success—for what with the sea and Scotland, the country and the continent, I found that London was nearly depopulated. "Well, well," said I, as I turned into Burton-crescent, "I am sure of finding my old friend Mrs. W. and her maiden daughter, at least; they are none of your migratory misses, who take their annual flight to wells or watering-places; they are sure to be in London all the year round."—"Will you have the goodness to tell Mrs. W. that a gentleman wishes to see her, Ma'am," said I, touching my hat to the scullion-looking wench who opened the door—for I began to learn humility.

"Sir," replied she, "Mrs. W. is at Fonthill, with her daughter."

"What! at Mr. B.'s?"

"Yes, Sir, I believe that's the gemman's name."

"Indeed!" exclaimed I, "guests at Fonthill! and *ladies* too! Heavens! how times and customs are changed since I was in Wiltshire!"—But the newspapers told me the secret next morning.

But this is too bad, thought I: no one in town—all my friends absent—and I a perfect stranger in the land! Come, come, I will bend my steps to my old camp-companion R——, who has thrown aside his sword as assistant-surgeon, and taken up his pestle as a master-

apothecary. He will moralize with me on thousands of past scenes—he will tell me, with his old good-humoured quaintness, the merits of the last new actor—detail to me the *minutiæ* of the last pitched battle, and shake my right hand with the same honest grasp as when he put me into the Dover coach seven years ago, slipping into my left a box of antibilious pills, with strenuous advice to get rid of the effects of my fever, and avoid every thing heating but ginger and Cayenne pepper. In the direction of his well-remembered residence I accordingly proceeded; and, after many wanderings in divers beautiful streets, crescents, and quadrants, and wonderings at *dis*orders of architecture, unrivalled in the wildest absurdities of Moorish, Chinese, or Egyptian design, which are, to quote an old author describing what must have been the prototype of Regent-street, &c. "licentious, fantastical, wild, and chimerical, whose profiles are incorrect, and whose imagery lamentable;" after exhausting my admiration at the general improvements of this part of the town, and my astonishment at the absurdity of their details, I was at last constrained to ask my way to the house of my old acquaintance. Imagine, good reader, my utter amazement when I learned that the spacious and splendid opening in which I proposed my enquiry to an old Irish apple woman (who decorated a corner, and puffed off the contents of her wheelbarrow, with a twang of the brogue and a touch of the blarney that to *me* was most mellifluous) was nothing less than the old, tottering, filthy passage, designated in my days of boyhood—*i. e.* seven years ago—Swallow-street; and that still, as if in mockery of the past, it retained its pristine appellation; but not the most gentle of my readers can well suppose the shock I received, upon learning from my sympathising informant that honest Jack R—— was no more; that not a vestige of his house, nor the remnant of a pill-box, not a grain of his powders, nor a drop of his phials, but were many a day buried in the rubbish of the old crazy habitation, and its very site forgotten but by two or three poor patients and pensioners, who went now and then, as the old apple-woman told me,

"to drop a salt tear upon the spot, to presarve the memory of the kindest-hearted sowl and most cleverest 'potecary, as ever gave comfort to a sore heart, or physic to a sick stomach."

I was sick at heart myself, and as I strolled some time longer in the noontide stillness of the squares and streets, a solemnity of feeling stole insensibly across my mind. There was something powerfully impressive in the contrast exhibited by this Sunday solitude in the midst of the most populous city of Europe, with the bustling holiday enjoyment of continental towns. When I thought of the Corso of Rome, the Prado of Madrid, and the Boulevards of Paris, I could not help moralizing and philosophizing awhile. The novelty of the actual scene before me struck forcibly on my senses, and its *policy* gave ample employment for reflection. Some hours' pondering on the question resolved themselves to a decision, and I thought myself then, and I think so even now, tolerably fitted to come to a fair judgment; for I had the seven years' force of prime-of-life observation on the one hand, and the whole strength of three times that period of early impression on the other—all kept in balance by the temperate and unbiassed desire for determining with truth. I think, then, decidedly, that the Sunday recreations of the Continent are, after all, to be preferred to the Sabbath solemnity of England; that the permission to be gay on one day in the week is more likely to raise the mind in cheerfulness to Heaven, than the command to be dull; that the evils consequent on dancing are light in comparison with those which attend on drunkenness; and that policy, piety, manners, and morals, stand, every one, a better chance of being served in the ball-room than in the gin-shop. I do not, however, while advocating universal enjoyment, object to occasional humiliations; and I think a day, now and then, of denial and gloom, might produce on the multitude an effect such as I myself then experienced, but which a weekly recurrence unquestionably fails to bring about. The Fasti and the Festivals, the Saturnalia and the Carnival, of ancient and modern Rome, have caused, and do cause, by their frequency and their licentious-

ness, but a weariness of dissipation, which it is vain to call pleasure. Arguing by analogy, I may safely say that the rigid observance of our Sundays is productive less of religion than of lassitude; while the incongruity of throwing wide the public houses, and closing up the most harmless exhibitions, makes me blush that in a land of such true and wise enjoyment, cant and hypocrisy should be found sufficiently strong to sanction and uphold the degrading anomaly.

But I am afraid of treating flippantly this serious subject. It has puzzled wiser heads than mine; and I can only repeat, that the impression made on me was certainly great, and I believe good. My thoughts seemed to run in quest of some object to repose on, or at least of some place where they might fittingly pursue their serious and measured march. I felt a sort of pious pride amid my loneliness: and I dwelt pleasedly on the literal truth—*Magna civitas, magna solitudo.* I had no longer any desire to meet an acquaintance or recognise a friend. I avoided the way to the lounging places, and strolled thoughtfully on to the Regent's park, near which I lost myself in a wilderness of cottages and villas, that had sprung up like magic since my last visit to London. One little piece of classic curiosity here particularly struck my attention. It was a brass plate on a door, with the inscription "DIGAMMA COTTAGE," which was chosen, I suppose, to puzzle the vulgar; while the *F* placed above it, though comprehensible to the learned, serves only to announce to the common eye, through its resemblance to one of the characters of our alphabet, the name of the celebrated owner. This information I obtained from a butcher's boy who was passing, and who assured me that "the F stood for Foscolo, the great Italian poet, and that Digamma was the Latin for *Die Game;*" which proved, what all the world said, that he was a true patriot into the bargain!

Evening was closing in. I bethought me of my distance from any place likely to afford refreshment, so I turned my face to the east, like the ancient Haruspices, when they contemplated a sacrifice or a feast. The streets became gradually more and more deserted, and

I walked on listlessly through the whole line of squares, till I found myself opposite the peristyle of St. Martin's church. I gazed awhile in admiration of this beautiful edifice, and stooped down astonished to perceive that I strolled upon tomb-stones in the very highway, whose half-worn inscriptions I puzzled myself to decipher, with as much earnestness and as little success as attended Dr. Clarke's attempts to elucidate the meaning of the hieroglyphics of the pillar of ON, in the land of Goshen. While thus occupied, I caught a low murmured succession of monotonous sounds, which seemed to come from within. A door was half open. I cautiously entered the church, and the hollow accents of the curate's voice, and the nasal tones of the clerk, who snuffled out the responses of the evening service, told me that I was in the house of prayer; where literally *two or three* were gathered together. What a contrast to the gaudy, fine dressed, flaunting display, assembled under the same dome that morning! But the immediate and direct appeal to the heart came too forcibly to allow me to indulge in reflections of bitterness. The most brilliant congregation in the universe—the most overflowing appearance of piety and pomp—could not have done me half so much good as the twilight loneliness of the church, the faint ray falling through the stained glass on the white surplice of the curate, whose calm demeanour, Welsh accent, and simple garb, assorted so well with the homeliness and humility of original christianity. The service went slowly on—no hurrying nor slurring, because the great folks of the parish were away—and the blessing being over, the worthy minister walked from the reading-desk, preceded by the clerk, and advanced in the direction where I stood leaning against a pillar. When he reached the north-west corner of the church, I discovered to my great surprise, three women and as many men, each couple provided with an infant, all of whom had slept as soundly during the service, as the bishop is said to do during an ordination sermon. The little things were now, however, roused by their intended godfathers and godmothers, and the ceremony of the christening commenc-

ed. Its simple solemnity was really and irresistibly affecting. The quiet conduct of the women, and the pastoral air of the minister, the steady visage of the old clerk, and the absence of all the stateliness of superstition, formed a combination of much which must have attended the primitive plainness of our religion, when it held no mystery and knew no trick. I contrasted all this with the gilt gingerbread processions and paltry mummeries I had had before my eyes for the last seven years. I was considerably moved by the scene before me. I am not ashamed to acknowledge even, that when the clergyman read the beautiful passage from the Gospel of St. Mark, beginning, "They brought young children to Christ," I felt my eyes brim full of tears; and when I heard the plaintive cries of the little innocents, as he sprinkled them with the water for "the mystical washing away of sin," my cheeks confessed a moisture, which seemed to me, at the moment, not quite unsanctified.

When the parents retired with their precious charges, and the shadow of the clergyman faded in the distance of the side aisle, and the feeble step of the old clerk died away at the door of the vestry, I went out into the street. It was almost dark. The little lamps began to throw forth their twinkling light, mingled here and there with the brilliant illumination from a gas-conductor. I pursued my way rapidly to my inn, avoiding to cast my eyes to the right or the left, for fear of being shocked by the opening orgies of the night-revellers; those sabbath-offerings of the dissolute, which, in my actual mood, would have been insupportably revolting.

A CITY FEAST.

Among the things to be seen and observed in great cities, are the courts of princes, the courts of justice, &c. &c.; as for triumphs, masks, feasts, weddings, funerals, capital executions, and such shows, men need not be put in mind of them. BACON'S *Essays*.

IF it must be confessed that anticipations of pleasure generally end in disappointment, it is no less true that matters from which we expect only dissatisfaction, often turn out to be very agreeable. I never saw a prize-fight but once; and I remember well that I approached the scene of combat certain of coming away disgusted. The result was, however, different. I went, from the laudable curiosity of witnessing a national peculiarity, (although not included in my Lord Verulam's list,) and I met the reward of my spirit of research, in seeing an animated display of courage, force, and skill. The distance at which the spectators were placed beyond "the ring" allowed them to observe all that was inspiring in the scene—the vigorous forms, graceful attitudes, determined looks, and strenuous exertions of the pugilists; but it kept them far enough away to lose every thing repulsive—the blood (scarcely allowed to gush forth when wiped away by the seconds), the discoloured faces, the exhaustion of frame, and convulsive agitation of nerve and muscle. We saw the bravery, we forgot the brutality; we were kept in a state of strong excitement; and being as well wound up (and almost as ready to strike) as the stop-watch which the umpire held in his hand, we never lagged in interest till the blow which decided the battle; and we left the ground, at least some of us, astonished at ourselves and all around us. This is a case in point.

What are the notions of the uninitiated respecting a city feast? Are they not compounded of contempt and loathing? Do we not picture to ourselves the most odious excesses of gluttony, cramming, swilling, and repletion—indigestion, black faces, and apoplectic fits? I am quite certain that the image of a single alderman at dinner (if such has ever crossed the fancy of the reader) was in itself enough to produce these associations. What then was to be expected from the idea of the whole corporation together, met in solemn conclave to celebrate, over turtle and venison, the election of the city chiefs! "No matter," thought I, "I will accept the invitation, steel myself against the disgust, and witness this new exhibition of life, so utterly unknown by us men of the west, in our hereditarily comparative lack of wisdom."

There was something propitiating in the name of the place where the dinner was to be given. "STATIONERS' HALL" read well on the broad printed card of invitation. This smacks of literature, thought I, and savours of civilization. Had it been 'Fishmongers' Hall,' or 'Butchers' Hall,' or 'Bakers' Alley,' or 'The Poultry,' I verily believe my squeamishness would have triumphed over my curiosity, and the anticipated steams of a surfeit have risen in the throat of my imagination, to prevent my being of the party. Then I heard that one of the sheriffs, the senior one too, was an eminent publisher. That looked well. It was giving literature, in the person of its civic representative, the whip-hand over sadlery, the profession of the junior; and having myself a sort of smattering of "the bookish trade," I was put in perfect good temper, by what I could not help considering a personal compliment.

Being rather ignorant of the city topography, east of Temple Bar, I threw myself upon the guidance and guardianship of the driver of the jarvey, which I had hired for the occasion. He drove me to the top of an eminence near St. Paul's, and pulled up, in the midst of a crowd of carriages, at the entrance of a narrow passage on the left. In a moment I was under the portico, and on the steps of the entrance into Stationers' Hall,

and making my way through a group of livery servants, (or livery *men*, Heaven knows which I should call them,) I mingled with the crowd that was assembled in the dinner-room.

A gentleman in black took my card: another ushered me through an alley of tables, decked with festoons of roses (to be presently sported under by the aldermanic *cupidons*)—and then up some half-dozen steps, into a drawing-room, hung with portraits of old citizens, and other less appropriate pictures, and nearly filled by the entertainers and their guests. I was quite astounded by the display of corporation costume. About every fifth man wore a robe, of one colour or another; about every tenth a gold chain; one in the hundred bore a broad badge of honour on his breast, in the form of a silver plate; and there were civic dignitaries of various degrees, from members of the Stationers' Company up to the Lord Mayor. It was altogether a goodly company. I am fond of representative assemblies, shewing the props and ornaments of corporate power and glory; and here was an epitome of the greatness of the greatest city in the world! All the nauseous accessaries of filthy trade were kept apart; and I saw before me the pith and marrow, without the details, of the warehouses, and banking-houses, and counting-houses, and custom-houses of London.

I was beginning to get entangled in rather an agreeable labyrinth of thought, when a loud buzz announced the coming of something more than common—some one superior to the "small deer" that dropped in one by one to fill up the herd around me. "The Right Honourable George Canning!" roared out in Stentorian tone, by the servant at the door (or the usher, or the secretary, for I am unaffectedly afraid of getting into mistakes,) was the signal for the entrance of the minister. He has a fine head certainly—Spurzheim could not deny it, and a corresponding person—I defy Chantry to contradict me; but as I am not minister of the *interior*, "further this deponent knoweth not." Dinner, which had been kept waiting for him and his fidus Achates, Mr. Huskisson, was now evidently making its

way towards the table in the next room; for I saw several knowing-looking fellows elbowing through the crowd, and going breast high towards the savoury odour which came in upon us, like a pack of fox hounds in full chase. I was hustled about without ceremony, and sadly puzzled what to do with myself, when to my great delight I espied a very pleasant fellow, whom I had frequently met at parties in the west end of the town, shoving his way towards me. I, like the tail of a well-pleased dog, was determined to be waggish on this occasion, and put on a look of anti-recognition.

"How does my good friend?" cried he, stretching out his hand.

"Well, God-a-mercy," replied I, as Hamlet did to Polonius.

"Do you not know me?" asked he, taking the cue.

"Excellent well; you are a *fishmonger*," said I.

"Egad, you have it," cried he, laughing—"a sort of fishmonger, it is true; I am a *place*-hunter, my friend, just now; so come along: I saw your name on the sheriff's list, and I contrived to get you the seat next my own—in the very heart of the feast too."

"Not among the aldermen, I hope," said I.

"No, no; among the *authors*, you dog; in the feast of reason and the flow of ——"

"What the deuce," interrupted I, "have the sheriffs had the cruelty to ask any of that tribe, and add to their irritability by a tantalizing taste of these doings?"

"Ay, that they have," replied he; "and I'll lay my life on it, that after you have spent this evening in their circle, you will allow *the tribe* to be the very essence of the invited."

We were soon seated at the end of one of the three tables which were appropriated for the leather and prunella part of the assemblage, and which shot down in parallel lines from the top piece, where sat the higher classes of the company—the city chiefs, the ministerial guests, Members of Parliament, Aldermen, &c. I quickly had occasion to rejoice in my situation, and began to make my friend useful as a shower of the lions.

"Come now," said I, "raise up your long pole (he's a long-headed fellow,) and give me a nod of information as to the company. Who is he that handles the ladle so scientifically, and answers so courteously the many troublesome calls upon him?"

"That's Doctor K——, to whom optics, and music, and astronomy, and gastronomy, are all equally familiar, who is giving a practical lecture to his neighbours on 'the art of exhausting and emptying a tureen of turtle soup.'"

"And he yonder of the handsome countenance, with a foreign order round his neck, and looking altogether like the Lord Mayor of Literature?"

"Professor S——, the German dramatic critic, who can pose our best poets on the phraseology of Shakspeare, and who has only the one fault of devouring the immortal bard entire, beauties and faults alike, just as that hungry common-councilman would eat a turtle holus-bolus, calipash and calipee indifferently with the offal."

"Then that intelligent-looking man in spectacles?"

"B——, the patriot, who extracted out of the dungeons of Boulogne prison some sharp thorns to strew over the rosy bed of the Bourbons."

"Who is the next?"

"Come, come," said my friend, "don't think that I'll enact the part of Macbeth's witches, and tell you the history of all these choice spirits while that cauldron is boiling on the table. How do you like the soup, by the bye?"

"Egad, to speak the truth," answered I, "I think 'tis mock turtle."

"Mock turtle, Sir?" exclaimed a horror-stricken citizen, who overheard me, "*Mock!* good God, Sir! have you had none of the green fat? Waiter! hand over that gemman's plate. Doctor! have the kindness to fish out a prime piece of the flesh for this gemman. Not *that*, Doctor—some of the green. Mock! mock turtle! do, Sir, do me the favour just to let that *slip down*. Mock! well, what do you say now, eh?"

"I confess my ignorance, Sir," answered I, "and acknowledge your civility."

"Eat, eat, Sir," said he, "and never mind compliments. Are you ready for a glass of turtle punch, Sir?"

"Quite at your service, Sir," replied I.

"Help yourself, then, out of that 'ere black pint bottle, and never mind me. Your health, Sir!"

At this moment a band of wind instruments struck up a stunning strain from the gallery, and I moralized on the admirable management which thus gave this apropos interruption to every effort at conversation, leaving the company so good an excuse for attending solely to the more solid duties of the day. The music never ceased till the first course was removed; and the keen edge of appetite being by that time taken off, the countenances around me individually brightened up. The officially robed gentlemen, who had all sat down in their trappings, now threw them away, with the exception of the lord mayor and sheriffs, who still shone in all their glorious caparisons of scarlet, gold, and ermine.

The second course was served: the music began again; but the leader, like his prototype Timotheus, adapted his strains to the melting mood of the listeners, and allowed a free flow to the stream of wit that went round. Jokes, old and new, bad puns, and quaint quotations, were quite the order of the day. One of the *literati* was carving a haunch of venison. He sent a liberal portion to another of the elect—not the lord mayor or the sheriff.

"I thank you for my venison, Master Shallow," quoth the helped.

"Master *Page*, much good may it do your good heart," was the apt reply.

"Ah!" cried a third, who was helped to a slice nearest the edge, "that was the most unkindest cut of all;" and immediately added, as the carver loaded his plate with sweet sauce, "Ohe! Jam satis."

"Why, it isn't *Jam*," said a fourth; "we authors all eat jelly with our venison."

"Ever since the days of *Aulus Gellius*," muttered a fifth.

A hundred puns and repartees, all full as bad, and therefore quite as pleasant, went round.

"Voilà, mon ami, voilà la honte de l'Angleterre, aussi grande que le *tread-mill !* c'est cette fourchette-là," exclaimed a talented-looking Frenchman to his opposite neighbour, having made various vain attempts to eat, with the aid of a two-pronged steel fork, some green peas which had been forced for this occasion.

"Oui, mon cher," replied his friend, "je vois bien qu'elle vous met aux travaux forcés."

"What language is thot?" asked one of the Scotch authors.

"Gallic," said B.

"Nae, I'll be hanged af it's Gaelic," replied the Scot, "I dinna come frae the braes o' Bannock to be bamboozled that a-way."

"And who is the indignant Frenchman?" said I to my friend.

"Felix B.," answered he, "one of the wittiest writers in the wittiest paper in Paris, the *Miroir;* he is just come over to comment on English customs, and he begins, you see, by a subject that has some point in it."

The table once more cleared, *Non nobis, Domine,* was warbled forth by the public singers with exquisite melody. Then came the toasts—then the speeches, all moderate and manly—just what a public character and a political oration ought to be; and in here paying my tribute to the talents of the performers, let me not forget the superexcellent toast-master, who, mounted on an eminence behind the Chief Magistrate's chair, with a glass in his hand, prepared the company for their duty by the oft-reiterated sounds of, "Are ye charged, gemmen?"—"Gemmen, clear off your charge!"—and then repeated the announcement of each successive toast, in a voice which, compared to the chairman's, was a culverin replying to a popgun, and which, when his lordship called out, "Three times three!" answered, "Hip, hip, hurra!" as naturally as Paddy Blake's echo, that whenever any one cried, "How do you do this morning?" was sure to answer, "Very well, thank ye!"

I wish I could now come to a climax worthy of my subject, and say in one short sentence all that it deserves. I can truly declare that I never spent a more social evening, nor witnessed a feast of greater propriety. On quitting my lodgings I had provided myself with a case of lancets, in the certainty of having my smattering of surgical skill called in to the aid of some suffocating gourmand; but I solemnly protest I never saw more temperance or decorum in words or action. The only vein I saw breathed during the day was one of good fellowship and good humour. Men of many nations were there, English, Irish, and Scotch—with Germans, French, and other foreigners—but all, as it were, of one family. Men of all professions and parties, of the most opposite extremes, and all *touching*. Lawyers and clients, reviewers and authors, smiling and chatting together—the wolf playing with the kid. Radicals and Tories, Lord Mayor and minister, bandying compliments—the lamb lying down with the lion: —all, in short, a scene of primitive simplicity and peace.

THE

PLEASURES OF THE TABLE.

So down they sat,
And to their viands fell; nor seemingly
The angel, nor in mist, the common gloss
Of theologians, but with keen dispatch
Of real hunger.

MILTON.

I HAD long sought for the reasons of the outcry which some people raise against the pleasures of the table. Hard study of men and things led at length to the discovery. The causes are, weak stomachs, unsocial tempers, affected simplicity, and stinginess; always allowing some latitude to the convenient maxim, that there is no general rule without an exception—or two. Thus there may be some who abstain from social enjoyments under such virtuous apprehension as that they might hurt their constitution; a few who do so from sectarian superstition; and others from cant. To *stop the mouths* of such cavillers is now my object.

Taking the subject in its plainest point of view, we should begin with infancy, and see what honest, unsophisticated Nature says and does. The first cry of childhood is for food; and when every other appetite is dead, that most wholesome of all continues to the extremity of (healthy) old age. Nature thus gives her broadest sanction to this indulgence, and we may well exclaim, with the poet—

O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
To those budge doctors of the stoic fur,
And fetch their precepts from the cynic tub,
Praising the lean and sallow abstinence.

Children, in their innocence, are the greatest gluttons in the world, except old people perhaps. I have not examined the latter so closely; but neither one nor the other are slaves to that artificial refinement which thows a bar against their comforts: the first have not learnt these qualms, and the latter forget them. Amidst all the joys of my early life, some of the happiest were those snatched by stealth in the larder, the dairy, and the housekeeper's room; and I often taste, in fancy, the identical smack on my palate which followed the surreptitious delights of some violated cream-bowl or pot of preserves. I appeal to all my candid readers—to all, at least, who had the good fortune of passing their years of youth in the country—who with their brothers and sisters, (for *there* lay the great charm, after all), a joyous little knot of freebooters, have stolen into the orchard by a passage scratched through the white-thorn hedge; have lived hours entrenched in the turnip-field, or the lofty sanctuary of the bean-row; sucked the new-laid eggs in the hen-house; made puddings of raw peas, with a paste of bread mixed up with pump-water, or river-water, or dish-water—whatever came first; lain listless under a gooseberry-bush, nibbling the large, hairy, green or red fruit, like young goats browsing on heath blossoms; or stolen a march on the dairy-maid, and laughed at her from behind the hedge, when she found the cows had been milked. And then the blackberries—the crab-apples—the sloes—the sop in the pan! But why raise in my readers these mouth-watering reminiscences? why conjure up a feast of memory and flow of recollections, scarcely less undefined and shadowy than those of reason or the soul?

I am not a *very* old man, but old enough to have grown garrulous and discursive—old enough to know that he who has eaten the bread of bitterness, and drunk the water of disappointment, may be allowed the indulgence of a retrospect of whatever was of en-

joyment. I therefore claim the privilege of dwelling awhile on my boyish days. Well do I remember when I thought the fate of Nebuchadnezzar by no means an unquestionable punishment; when I calculated the delights of his liberty, ranging the pastures with the cattle, eating clover to his heart's content, rolling on the grass, splashing in the rivulets, jumping the hedges, and learning no lessons! Thus balancing the phytivorous advantages of his degradation with the splendid miseries of his throne and greatness, I was very much tempted to consider him most worthy of pity when the term of his probation expired.

But passing by the vapoury abstractions of my youthful mind, which led me into fanciful contemplations such as this, and turning to a less mighty personage than the last, I will regale my recollection with the picture of Old Edward the Butler. I have him this instant in my eye: his sleek hair combed nicely on his forehead, his rosy cheeks, carbuncled nose, liquorish lip-smacking smile, and true *bon vivant* glance which measures the merit, and tastes by anticipation, every dish on the table. He had a noble protuberance of belly, too, a real holiday rotundity, such as might be thought the legitimate consequence of earlier and better times, when "our ancestors ran Christmas-day, New-year's-day, and Twelfth-night, all into one, and kept the wassail-bowl flowing the whole time." Such a man was old Edward: the living epitome of good-nature and good-living, the breathing personification of enjoyment, the mortal type of merry-making, the Falstaff of real life, the very counterpart of Spenser's October:

> Full of merrie glee,
> The while his nowle was totty of the must
> Which he was treading in the wine-fat's see,
> And of the joyous oyle, whose gentle gust
> Made him so full of frolic and of lust.

I verily believe that this old servant was the primary cause of my relishing, as I have done through life, the good things of life. He used to secrete for me (and himself) the nicest imaginable tit-bits: used often and often to tip me his benevolent wink, as I passed the pantry-door; and many were the moments that we

spent there, in hail-fellow-well-met companionship, discussing the remains of tarts, pies, and puddings,

> In many a bout
> Of linked *sweetness* long drawn out.

His example was of one real benefit to me, however: he had no selfishness in him, and he taught me to despise *gluttony*, for he could never eat for eating sake. He would sooner let his most delicate morsels rot in a crust of mouldiness than devour them alone.

I believe it is from regard to this poor fellow's memory that I am so fond of corpulence. I cry out continually, with Cæsar, "Give me the man that is fat!" I love the look of an alderman—a stage-coachman—the king's butler, and the king himself; because the very paunch of each and every of them seems to tell a round, unvarnished tale of good fellowship. Yet I think that poor Edward had more of the thing itself stamped on his countenance than any of them. He had not a wrinkle or care-worn line on his cheeks or forehead.—But enough of him! My heart and my eyes are full. Enough of myself too! I will quit my egotism, and speak generally.

What, then, let me ask you, *candid* reader, what was the happiest hour of the day at school? Not the dinner hour, most assuredly; for we remember well what rough, tough stuff we had, all of us; little meat and plenty of pudding—and *such* pudding! No: the happiest hour of the four and twenty was invariably that in which we skulked in the barn, or hay-loft, or a corner of the shrubbery, (two or three sworn friends,) and fell upon the purchase of our joint quotas of pocket-money—some savoury sausages, bought at the porkshop hard by; or a hot loaf (slipped in, for the fee of a penny, by our trusty and well-beloved cousin, the baker's boy), with a huge lump of butter, bursting in liquefied luxuriousness through the yawning rents which we made in the smoking quartern. And if a pot of porter or bottled ale washed down the feast!——

Next to the butler and the baker's boy aforesaid, I believe I have—(*ego* once more, but I cannot get on in the third person or second person, singular or plural)

—I have to thank the poets for my real relish for the pleasures of the table. I have remarked that all of that tribe, whatever their language or their subject, have contrived some *how* or other to bring in, some *where* or other, the praise and recommendation of feasting. It was not till my after-years that I began to marvel how the deuce these rhyming epicureans had that particular branch of *imagination* so common and so forcible.

But now for the simple and self-evident delights of feasting. I will speak of it in its more elevated associations, as a raiser of the spirits and a warmer of the heart. I shall not press the well-known fact, that feasting has been in most ages and countries a *sine quâ non* in all arrangements, religious, political, or amatory—whether sacrifices to the gods, coronation feasts, ministerial dinners, or wedding fêtes champêtres. I forbear to quote heathen authorities, and shall simply let the minds of my readers repose on the contemplation of the installation feast of an English archbishop, in the reign of one of our Edwards, when there was a consumption of one hundred and four oxen, one thousand sheep, two thousand pigs, one hundred and four peacocks, and four hundred swans! Neither shall I cite the poetry, even of scripture, for I shrink from the possibility of connecting it with a trivial subject; but I shall draw on the sublimest of profane writers, Milton—and hastily recall to my readers the reception which our first parents gave to the angel Raphael, in Paradise. They will remember that Eve was busied, on the angel's approach, preparing

> For dinner savoury fruits, of taste to please
> True appetite, and not disrelish thirst
> Of nectarous draughts between.

I need not recapitulate the abundant bill of fare, containing all the delicious fruits, "in coat rough or smooth rin'd,"

> Whatever Earth, all-bearing mother, yields
> In India east or west, or middle shore
> In Pontus or the Punic coast:

And every one will remember, or can refer to, the fourth book of Paradise Lost, for the rest of this truly pastoral scene:—the benevolence of the angel—the

blended humility and dignity of Adam—the innocence of Eve, who at the table

> Minister'd naked, and their flowing cups
> With pleasant liquors crown'd.

My motto for this article will be recognised as taken from the description of this exquisite repast. From that it will be seen how the greatest and most pious of bards looked upon the affected niceties of abstinence, and what a lesson of hospitality and enjoyment he wished to teach mankind; while it is certain that he himself practised the kindly humanities of social life: for in his epistle to his friend Laurence, he jovially says,

> What neat repast shall feast us light and choice,
> Of attic taste, with wine, etc.

The pleasures of the table adapt themselves to all situations and seasons, but may perhaps be best enjoyed in winter, when a good fire, a good dinner, good wine, and good company, form an assemblage of most surpassing delights. In the country, too, all this is better felt than in town. We have not so many distractions to interfere with our appetite or destroy it: small business, little politics, and no pastry-cooks' shops—those glutton-fostering, dinner-spoiling receptacles, where the consumers of pies and patties remind one of "the bevy of jolly, gossiping wenches," reproached by the fox in Sir Roger L'Estrange's fable, who, "lay stuffing their guts with hens and capons, and not a word of the pudding!"

No, no, give me the real charms of country fare, and a hearty welcome at holiday times, and let me see as much as possible the revival of old English hospitality,—full plates, bumper toasts, hob-nobbing, and the great hall thrown wide open, when, as Ben Jonson wrote to Sir Robert Wroth,

> The rout of rural folk come thronging in
> (Their rudeness then is thought no sin),
> The jolly wassail walks the often round,
> And in their cups their cares are drown'd.

It will be perceived that I despise all illustration drawn from turtle-feasts, Lord Mayor's days, and the like, loving more to dwell on the repasts of the country people. The pleasures of these most unsophisticated

members of the community, have been ever deeply involved in feasts and carousings; not in their excesses, but in their simple and moderate participation. I do not include in that class the wood-ranging party in the seventh book of Virgil, whose sharp-set appetites did not spare even the *adorea liba*, if we can believe the authority of Iülus, who exclaims

Heus! etiam mensas consumimus,—

but which of us has not wished to have been placed alongside of the Shepherd's King, in Drayton's "Polyolbion?"

In his gay baldric at his low grassy board,
With flawns, curds, clouded cream, and country dainties stored;
And whilst the bag-pipe plays, each lusty jocund swain
Quaffs syllabubs in cans.

What a picture of social without sensual indulgence! But I confess myself better pleased with the more substantial enumeration of Herrick, "the most rural of our poets, who passed his life, like a bird, in singing and making love." Hear him!

Ye shall see first the large and cheefe
Foundation of your feast, fat beef:
With upper stories, mutton, veale,
And bacon which makes full the meal;
With several dishes standing by,
As here a custard, there a pie,
And here all-tempting frumentie.

And, to conclude the subject of country tastes, let me now quote the amorous Cuddy from Gay's first pastoral.

In good roast-beef my landlord sticks his knife,
The capon fat delights his dainty wife;
Pudding our parson eats, the squire loves hare,
But white-pot thick is my Buxoma's fare.

Proofs of the importance of the "*jus divin*" might be cited never-endingly; but my observations have turned rather upon solid than liquid delights. I shall only then allude to the great Czar Vladimir, who, when about to change the idolatrous worship of his country, balanced awhile in his choice of a new religion. He was ravished (says Gibbon) with the voluptuous delights of Ma-

hometanism, but rejected the Koran, exclaiming, "Wine is the joy of the Russians: no, no, we cannot live without wine!"

Fill me a bumper then, I say, to the memory of the Czar Vladimir! a tribute to his good fellowship, but not a homage to excess. I am far from being the apologist of drunkenness or gluttony—and I say again, that moderate and honest indulgence is as distinct from that selfish enormity, as is the wholesome delight with which a hungry sportsman attacks a leg of mutton, from the hellish voraciousness of Count Ugolino, in Dante's Inferno, feeding on the skull of the Archbishop Ruggieri.

Gluttony—one of the worst of solitary vices—is the bane of table pleasures. It concentrates all that is gross in nature, with all that is unamiable in feeling, and unfits its victims for the real enjoyment of a feast. I would not preach forbearance to a starving man, for I know that

> Un ventre affamé
> N'a point des oreilles;

but I believe that

> If all the world
> Should in a pet of temperance feed on pulse,
> Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,
> Th' All-giver would be unthank'd.

Yes! I do believe that the Dispenser of all Good placed us here with feelings to enjoy, and surrounded us with the good things of life for our enjoyment; that He gave us palates to be gratified, not tantalized; and that the best way to show our gratitude, is to take the goods which he provides us. Give me, then, the pleasures of the table, in their moral and physical meanings together. I care not whether it be in the cottage of a peasant, or a stately palace, set out like that of Comus, "with all manner of deliciousness." But, best of any, let me have, in my own humble mansion, the blessings of the table—my friends around me—plenty of cheer—thankfulness to the Giver—a happy mind—a clean cloth—and, crowning all, let "good digestion wait on appetite, and health on both!"

THE ANATHEMA.

PARIS is certainly beaten ground; but there are some of its by-paths rarely trodden on, and many of its public places are full of interest that lies too deep for hurried observers. Its antiquity alone gives evidence that it must have been the scene of thousands of adventures and incidents, the memory of which have perished in the lapses of time. But history has preserved numerous details of romance and chivalry, relieving, by their lightness or their tenderness, the shades of its recorded crimes; and we may admit, without cavilling at its extravagance, the following complimentary acrostic on the name and character of this city, from the pen of a reverend and venerable eulogist.

"Pourpris d'honneur, precieuse maison,
Accroissement de tout bien et richesse,
Roc de vertu, et repos de raison,
Justice vraye en tout temps et saison,
Sçavoir de tout, etude de sagesse,
C'est de Paris le titre de noblesse!" *

The nooks and corners of great cities have a double population—of inhabitants and recollections. They are close crowded with associations; and we often hasten over the most common scenes, as ignorant of the sympathies by which they are haunted and hallowed, as "the greasy rogues," who cumber the paths, or plod along their sacred ways. Palaces in particular appear built to be gazed at, but not inquired into. Their gaudy exterior and lofty bearing, seem to check the inquisitiveness of the world, as if their aristocratic pride would turn into ourselves the look that

* Le Théâtre des Antiquitez de Paris. Par le R. P. F. Jaques du Breul. 1612.

might aim at fathoming their mysteries. Months of methodical inquiry may, however, fail to let us into these secrets; but a happy chance often brings us into immediate contact with some spring of sentiment, whence flow feelings of the brightest enjoyment.

Few of the promenades of Paris had such charms for me as the gardens of the Luxembourg. When wearied by the solemn fineries of the Tuilleries, the glitter of the Palais Royal, or the noise of the Boulevards, I generally crossed the river, and reposed for an hour in my favourite retreat. I sat down on one of the stone benches, under the shade of a sycamore, and gazed on the children sporting round me, on a tender couple exchanging soft looks and words—or on the other specimens of pleasure which always abound in the place. I marked now an admirer of sculpture, as motionless as the statue he stared at; again, an amateur of flowers, bending over the parterre, and feeding on the loveliness of its productions. Antiquated beings of either sex often fixed my eye, as they basked in the sunny spots—varieties of those living monuments which recall the memory of past days—animated powder puffs—muffed and tippeted disciples of the old school, who cling to the silk coats, pink breeches, canes, queues, and cocked hats of the *ancien regime*:—while in the shady avenues, I frequently remarked the pale and slovenly students, a book in their hands, and their eyes fixed on the page. I used to please myself in fancying that I discovered the nature of their studies from the movements which, in their abstraction, these youths involuntarily fell into. If, for example, I saw one of them tracing angles, curves, and parallelograms, instead of walking straight forward in his path, I set him down as a mathematician. Did another stop frequently, and toss his arms about, then bite his nails and snap his fingers, I invariably placed him among those mooters of law points, who begin with declamation, proceed obscurely, and make a flippant ending. The disciple of Esculapius betrayed himself by his regulated pace, and the pestle-like motion with which he struck his cane upon the ground: and whenever a lank and wild-looking creature threw his eyes alternately to heaven and earth,

stumbled over the benches, or knocked his head against the trees, I believe the closest reasoner will not accuse me of paralogy in having concluded that I gazed on a poet. I had thus my theory as well as Lavater or Gall; and by its rules I studied the whole tribe of students, lecturers and professors, who poured in every day at certain hours, from that cluster of narrow lanes, called the *Pays Latin*, to shake off the dust of the school, and draw in a mouthful of pure air.

I was one evening thus seated in the indulgence of my contemplation, when I observed a young gentleman, shabbily dressed, walking forwards and backwards at a slow pace. The frequent application of his handkerchief to his eyes, and his air of distress, plainly told me the state of his mind. I cannot say that I am ever averse to the observation of silent grief. It must be a hard heart that is not touched by the evidence of sorrow; and I believe the oftener that most of us allow ourselves such opportunities, the better. I felt myself mentally and sentimentally drawn towards this sufferer, but I experienced a physical repulsion proportionably strong. In fact, I could not for any reward, have gone up to speak to him, and I shrunk away as often as he approached me. After some time spent in irregular movement, he once more made towards the place where I sat; and there seemed in his manner something more of fixed purpose than before. Fearing that I might be in the way of his object, I rose, and was preparing to retire, when he waved his handkerchief and motioned me to stop. I was not a little surprised, but obeyed his signal; and when he came close, he bowed to me with a most obliging air, and addressed me thus:

"Do not be surprised, Sir, at the liberty I take with you, a perfect stranger. I see that my sorrow has caught your attention; and I feel it necessary to commit this outrage on your privacy, lest in my despair I might do myself, perhaps, a greater!"

I was rather embarrassed; but I have seen enough of sorrow, one way or another, to know that though it is hard to stop its source, its channel may be easily turned. On this principle I offered no checks, in the

way of consolation or argument, to the tears of my companion; but remarked to him, that if the secret feelings of the many who then filled the garden were known to us, he might find parallels to his grief, be it ever so deep-rooted.

"Ah! yes," cried he, "I am aware of the sympathy which draws together so many wretches in this place. I know the charm which this spot possesses for the wearied sufferers of the world."

"Indeed," replied I, glad to get him on a general topic, "it would be hard to find a more soothing retreat for misfortune. These beautiful parterres—this pure air—these cheerful terraces seem to invite ——"

"What do I hear;" cried he, with an astonished stare. "Do you mock me, Sir? Could cheerfulness or pleasure hold a charm for me? Oh, Emilie, Emilie!—Cheerful—beautiful! Alas, Sir, you are a stranger. Did you know the ground you trod on, you would think differently of the place. No, Sir! These doleful gardens wear the garb of woe. Melancholy has chosen them for her empire, and sorrow for its refuge. All writers are united on that point. And if, let me ask in the words of a modern author,—if it is impossible to think, without a sigh, of the isle of Naxos, or the banks of the Mondego, the fountain of the Vaucluse, or the forest of the Paraclet; why should we forget, in this amorous topography, the ancient Château Valvert, which history, imagination and sentiment unite to dignify!"

Having thus exclaimed, with a theatrical air, he stalked away; and, as he glided through the plantation, I saw him cast his looks from earth to heaven. A little further, encountering one of the benches, he fell bodily over it, sprawling on the ground, and had scarcely recovered his legs when his head came in violent contact with one of the lime trees. The abruptness of this hint seemed to bring him to himself, for he walked rapidly to the next gate and disappeared, leaving me at no loss to judge of his pursuits and profession. I never had the pleasure of seeing him again; and though somewhat piqued to have been so taken in by the rhapsodies of a

flighty poet, I nevertheless resolved to ascertain on what foundation they were built. A little stung by the justice of his remark, "that I did not know the ground I trod on," aware of the influence which historical recollections have upon the mind, and knowing how much association regulates our likings and antipathies, I resolved to examine into the history of the spot.

I do not mean to display to my readers all the secrets of my researches. In truth, I am apprehensive that if I wrote all I have learned on this mighty matter, my pages would be turned over faster than printed. But in all my reading for centuries back, if I may so express myself, I could find nothing to corroborate the poet's assertion; nor, in the long list of noble and royal names connected with the palace, aught which could attach to it any very overwhelming interest. I betook myself therefore to more modern studies, and found, to my utter surprise, that the poet was fairly and honestly borne out in the gloomy picture he had drawn, by the united opinions of several authors, who have apparently laboured under some such unhappy influence as his own.

One of these,* having to describe the monotonous and melancholy life of an old bachelor, and wishing to give him a fitting recreation, makes him walk in the Luxembourg—

"Je vais au Luxembourg me promener un peu."

Another author† makes it the asylum of silence, retirement, and deep thought. In a work‡ more systematic and original than his, are the following reflections on these gardens: "Il semble que la langueur habite en personne ces lieux, dont aucune métamorphose ne saurait changer l'impression. C'est un point du globe décidément dévoué à la taciturnité. En vain l'art et le luxe y rassembleraient tout ce qui peut charmer les yeux, ils ne sauraient arracher l'âme au sentiment de tristesse qu'elle y respire. Je ne répondrais même pas

* M. Colin d'Harleville.
† Mercier. Tableau de Paris, t. ii. p. 219.
‡ Pensées et Reflections par Hippolite de Livry, t. vii. p. 184.

que, peuplé de houris, il reprit une face nouvelle. Ce jardin est l'emblême de la vie, que rien ne peut égayer. Je ne donnerais pas huit jours de promenade consécutive au Luxembourg, à quelqu'un enclin à la melancolie, pour y terminer sa languissante carrière."

A later work* allows that, under the improvement of M. Chalgrin the architect, (whose *name* is so nearly in unison with the *nature* of others who have laboured there,) these gardens have assumed an appearance *somewhat* "*plus riant et plus agréable qu'autrefois.*"

But all this accordance of opinion, as to the characteristic melancholy of the place, fell short of my desire, which was, to have a notion so much at variance with my own rationally accounted for. I still sought my object; and at length met with an author who, abandoning all hope of establishing a solid reason for the conceit, takes refuge in imagination, and retracing the steps of historical record, attributes to the memory of two royal lovers the secret sympathy which steals upon his soul. In the warmth of poetical fancy he exclaims, "Delicious shades, dark arbours of the Luxembourg, why have not the muses added their voluptuous enchantment to that of your promenades? Why has not poetry joined its efforts to those of the other arts, which have united to embellish you with their wonders? A few stanzas on *Bertha and her lover* would have given to your perfumes and your bowers a sweeter and more mysterious charm; and in the rustling of the zephyrs through your leaves, fancy might still whisper that we heard the tones of the sacred harp! May it not be permitted to the poet to attribute the inconceivable melancholy of these grounds to the unhappy loves of which they were formerly the witness, and to the torrents of tears by which they were bedewed? Might we not thus explain the attraction which they have always had for the afflicted and contemplative mind? It is in vain that sculpture has mingled the laughing figures of the Loves and Graces. It is in vain that all which is most amiable in nature assembles here. Noth-

* Tableau Historique et Pittoresque de Paris, t. iii. *Paris*, 1811.

ing can remove from this garden the air of woe, which strikes the lonely wanderer with surprise. Thanks to the adventures of ROBERT and BERTHA, his reveries are not without an object."*

To Robert and Bertha, then, my whole attention was turned. I do not mean to say that I had wholly forgotten the name of King Robert the Pious; but I must in candour acknowledge that almost every thing relating to him beyond *that*, had faded from my memory, in common with the particular details of many other virtuous monarchs. It is conquerors and tyrants that have fastened the firmest on my recollection! I remembered the prince in question only as nearly contemporary with Edwy of England, to the picture of whose persecution his own forms a fitting companion.

I left nothing undone to retrace his adventures with Bertha, his fair, but unfortunate cousin. Many an hour was passed in researches through the galleries of *La Bibliothèque du Roi*. Many a guardian spirit, which had long slumbered on its post of sentinel to the ponderous folios of the olden time, was wakened from its sleep of ages; many a dust-covered tome was roused from its repose as I mounted the huge step-ladders, accompanied by some assistant of Monsieur Van Pradt, the polite librarian, or of M. Haze, the no less accommodating keeper of the MSS. Many a smile of cheerful greeting has met me on my daily repeated visits, while I am pretty sure that the real feelings they covered were any thing but those of welcome. In short, for several days, my own patience and the politeness of my informants were taxed to the utmost. I had recourse to every thing that could bear on the point in question. Dissertation, biography, histories, collections, and chronicles; Martenne, Durandi, Mezerai, Rivet, and many another, lent their aid to fill my note-book. But I must, after all, acknowledge myself more indebted to M. de Marchangy and his interesting work, than all the others put together. I have freely availed myself of their united labours from first to last; but I found in "La Gaule

* La Gaule Poétique, par Marchangy, t. v. p. 33.

Poétique" the greater part of the details and colouring which filled up each earlier sketch.

I have only to add, that since I became familiar with the history of Robert and Bertha, I have experienced more strongly than ever the empire of imagination over fact. My walks in the Luxembourg have never since been accompanied by that fresh and joyous complacency which was wont to be their companion. I no longer see serenity and pleasure in its shades and flowers; I continually picture out in fancy the palace of Valvert and its persecuted inhabitants; and find a new proof of the power of feeling in stamping its character on all the works of Nature and Art.

THE STORY.

The prince, whose story I am about to relate, was the son of Hugues Capet, the celebrated founder of the present race of French Kings, and he succeeded his father on the throne of France in the year 998. History does not afford an example of an individual more richly endowed with the gifts of nature. He was descended from the most illustrious sources; the blood of Clovis and Charlemagne flowing in his veins, and deriving fresh purity from such channels. His person was a model of manly beauty,* his mind endowed with the brightest talents, and his heart the seat of every virtue. At little more than twenty years of age, he was crowned king, together with his father; and the first acts of his power were devoted to the glory of religion and the grandeur of the church. He convoked several councils for the suppression of heresies, made frequent pilgrimages to the tombs of the saints, composed many pious hymns, and was in the habit of joining his voice with that of the priests, who sang in cho-

* The following description of his person is from the pen of his biographer and contemporary, the Monk Helgaldus. "Hujus igitur statura corporis eminens, cæsaries admodum plana, et bene ducta, oculi humiles, nares porrectæ et patulæ, os suave et dulce ad dandum sanctæ pacis osculum, barba satis honesta, humeri ejus in altum porrecti."—*Epitome Vitæ Roberti Regis.*

rus the praise of the Most High. But his piety was not confined to these questionable proofs. He displayed the utmost munificence in honour of religion, founded many churches and monasteries, and distributed in charity the greater part of his treasures. His humility was proportioned to his munificence, for he went constantly accompanied by twelve paupers, and frequently with his own hands fed and clothed the poor.* It is not then surprising that he obtained the title of "the most pious of kings."

But this wonderful display of virtue, however sublime, is characteristic of a saint rather than a king; and Robert would probably have been handed down to posterity only as a canonized monarch and a worker of miracles,† had he not been tenderly alive to one passion, which unites him to our sympathies by a tie the most binding to humanity. An object of admiration to all

* These acts gave occasion to the following verses, by one whom Helgaldus styles *Clarissimus Versificator*:—

Major cura boni est fratrum relevare labores,
Et fieri optatum tristibus auxilium;
Pascere jejunos, nudos vestire, ligatos
Solvere, discordes conciliare sibi:
Et quæcumque homines miseri solatia quærunt,
Hæc ut possibile est promere corde pio,
Ut recti veri cupidus, vereque benignus,
Quæ mala sunt fugiat, quæ bona sunt faciat.

That these (adds Helgaldus) were to be found in such a man, every one knew, because God always loved him.

† The worthy monk, not content with clothing his hero in real attributes, was resolved to decorate him with superhuman powers. He therefore tells us, that Robert having ordered a palace to be built, and coming to it for the first time to a splendid banquet on Easter day, a blind man approached, and humbly besought him to throw in his face some of the water in which he was washing his hands. The king, unconscious of his own sanctity, did so with a jocular air; when, to the astonishment of all present, the blind man recovered his sight, i. e. *the impostor opened his eyes.*

Helgaldus also records a peculiarity of Robert's, when on horseback, which, he says was looked on as another miracle: and the obscurity of the sentence being worthy of the subject, I give it in the monk's own words—"Sedens equo regio, mirabile dictu, pene jungebant pedum digiti calcaneo."

This flexibility of foot and the pretended miracle are the only materials on which superstition could work, to deprive Robert of our sympathy, by making him more than a man.

the princesses of France and the neighbouring countries, his alliance was sought by several monarchs, whose daughters would have been but too happy had Robert even listened to their claims for competition. But his heart received no enjoyment from such distinction; and, during the pomps and ceremonies of each new embassy, he only thought of his beauteous and beloved cousin, Bertha, daughter of Conrad, the King of Burgundy.

Known to each other from infancy, the lovers had grown up on terms of the purest affection. The happiest days of Robert had been passed in the territories of his kinsman Conrad, where, wandering hand in hand with Bertha, he had so often traced the windings of the romantic Saone, gazed on the blue and shadowy chain of distant Alps, and forgot the world's realities, while picturing a futurity of bliss, never, alas! to be realized. A little circumstance, in early life, had tended to draw this young couple more closely together, and gave them a sort of spiritual alliance, on which they loved to dwell, as a prelude to their coming union. A peasant woman, in whose little vineyard, overhanging the river, the young playmates used sometimes to repose, had solicited the honour of Bertha's becoming sponsor to her newborn infant. The princess, delighted at the importance of the office, was resolved to associate in it him, without whose participation nothing was a pleasure to her. The young heart of Robert bounded gladly at this auspicious connexion. The fête on occasion of the baptism was a joyous one; and for several years the sponsors fulfilled their duties in watching over and providing for the child.

After the first acts of Robert's reign, which proved that he considered his duties towards Heaven above the concerns of mortal happiness, he turned his views to that long-hoped-for union, whose bright perspective had shone resplendent through all the scenes of his hitherto unruffled life. He was, however, too well acquainted with the complicated abuses which then disgraced the church, not to be aware of two slight obstacles to his marriage. It was prohibited between relatives so distant as the *seventh* degree; and, by a greater stretch of

absurdity, between those persons who had held together an infant at the font. These regulations having been enacted, not in the spirit of religion, but for the furtherance of pontifical power, Robert did not hesitate to believe that a dispensation would be easily procured.

With his accustomed deference to the papal authority, he prepared a deputation for the purpose of making the demand; but whether from an afterfear of refusal, or from ardour in the pursuit of that blessing so immediately within his reach, his first intention was fatally abandoned. Yet he did not attempt to consummate his union, without such authority as he believed competent to sanction its irregularity. He summoned together the bishops of his kingdom, to whose deliberations the question was submitted; and they, either from that political influence which ever took the lead of religious scruples with the papal tribunal itself, or perhaps from a conscientious conviction in the purity of their proceedings, solemnly gave their permission for the marriage, revoking, for the occasion, the canonical prohibition. Robert, though confident in the issue of his appeal, had, in common with all lovers, felt those occasional agitations which nothing but possession can remove. Scarcely was the ecclesiastical council dissolved, when the enamoured king hastened to his Bertha, with the decision which empowered him, indeed, to call her his.

The joys of lovers are concealed by an impenetrable yet fragile veil. They derive their exquisite delicacy in a great measure from this secrecy; and though no one may say what is the delight of the individual, every one is ready to believe that it cannot surpass what he has himself experienced. I leave it then to my readers to imagine that of Robert, while he pressed the lovely Bertha to his bosom, and his subsequent triumphant pride when they made their public entry into Paris, escorted by the prayers and blessings of their people.

This event was celebrated with all the splendour common to the nuptials of kings, but accompanied also by those softer endearments which kings but seldom taste. The magnificent fêtes on the occasion gave lit-

tle pleasure to the new married pair; but they joined with fervid piety in the religious rites and ceremonies which hallowed their enjoyments. And when, after some days' abandonment to these public demonstrations, the people subsided quietly into the contemplation of the national good, the sovereign and his bride commenced, in the retirement of their palace, that reign of pure felicity which ended ere they felt it was begun.

Robert had, immediately after the celebration of his marriage, despatched ambassadors to the papal court to announce it, and humbly implore the pontifical benediction. But in that age the lust of power and pride of prerogative were more potent with the church than sympathy for human happiness, or compassion for mortal frailty. An extraordinary council was instantly assembled; and the irritated majesty of the Pope issued denunciations, which were echoed by the answering indignation of the fathers. A violent reproof was fulminated against the King of France, who, for having dared to be guided by the insufficient authority of the Gallican church, was commanded instantly to separate from his youthful bride; and a penance of seven years was enjoined to both.

The well-known piety and gentle disposition of Robert led his implacable judges to reckon on a prompt submission. They knew the important accession of temporal power to be gained by the punishment of such a distinguished offender; who, had he possessed a reputation for boldness proportioned to his virtue, had never, perhaps, been driven to a hazarded disobedience. The decree was solemnly proclaimed in France. The people heard it with consternation, and the king with amazement. He could scarcely believe its reality; but when his astonished ministers and terrified bishops confirmed its authenticity, he resolved on making every submission to the church, and obeying all its commands short of the abandonment of his bride. On this point he had not a moment's hesitation, and in the most trying hours of his subsequent misery he never swerved from his resolution.

Supplications for clemency were addressed to the

papal throne, in which the voice of the whole kingdom was joined to that of the king, but in vain. The indignant Pontiff a second time commanded the divorce; and, in default of instant compliance, empowered the legate to pronounce against Robert the following Anathema:—

"That he be cursed alike in the populous walks of the cities, and in the solitudes of the fields. That with him be cursed his children, his flocks, and his domains. That no Christian call him brother, nor grant him the salutation of peace. That no priest pray in his name, nor admit him to the altar of divine grace and favour. That friendship, consolation, and hope be banished from his deathbed; and that no beloved hand shall close his eyelids. That his entrails, like those of the impious Arius, fall from his half-open breast. That his corpse lie unburied on the banks of the affrighted river. That his bones whiten in the desert winds, while no pilgrim dares to strew a little earth over their wretched remains. That his name be a horror to future time, or rather that his memory be forgotten among men, and that the blessed dawn of a future life brighten not his shade!"*

The legate summoned Robert to compliance with the orders of the church, and on his refusal, promulgated the terrific denunciation. The historians have done well in not attempting to describe the effects produced on Robert, Bertha, and the other listeners to this frightful decree. We may imagine the despair which, in that age of superstition, must have followed its public announcement. We may picture the groups of selfish courtiers—the servile or conscientious clergy—the horror-stricken people—all moved by one impulse of superstition and obedience, to fly from the presence of their denounced and desolate sovereign.

In all parts of the kingdom the bishops raised their voices against the victim of their own act, and menaced him with the divine wrath.—His ministers—the favour-

* A parallel to this piece of atrocious eloquence may be found in the Appendix to Robertson's "Life of Charles V."

ites of his pleasures—the officers of his household—his very menials, dared not venture to hold communion with him, fearing infection from the breath of the excommunicated; an object more dreaded in those days of darkness than the contagion of malady or death. Two miserable slaves alone remained of his whole train of attendants: and these wretches, who were thus supposed to be sacrificed to eternal perdition, were forced to the office. They shuddered as they approached their unfortunate master and his partner in wretchedness: and with averted looks presented them their food, the remains of which were flung away, and the vases which they touched were purified by being passed through the flames.

In the midst of this abandonment, Robert sighed not for the honours and distinctions he had lost. He deeply lamented that he no longer saw in his forsaken vestibule the crowds of beggars, to whom he had daily distributed the evangelical bread, washing their feet in imitation of the primitive Christians. He wept to see that they fled from him now, as from a monster whose look was death.

But the overwhelming misery thus partaken by Robert and his youthful bride left them some moments of voluptuous repose, some hasty hours of forgetfulness of the tyranny of men, and of sublime reliance on the goodness of God. Become each other's world, and concentrating in themselves their affections, sympathies, and hopes, they found even in their desolateness resources of enjoyment unknown to the hearts of kings. Morning and night they wandered together in the gardens and shrubberies of the Palace Valvert,* which Robert had built, where the cloisters of the Chartreux were afterwards erected, and where the gardens of the Luxembourg extend at present. Here, while the church held them up as objects of divine wrath, and called down upon them all the miseries of life, they rejoiced to find in these peaceable solitudes as pure a sky

* The ground occupied by the Palace Valvert, or Vauvert, was granted by St. Louis to the Chartreux, by an Act dated at Melun, in the month of May, 1259.

and as fragrant a shade as they had enjoyed before the fulmination of the terrible anathema.

Encouraged by their belief in the goodness and clemency of Heaven, they sometimes hoped that God would pardon their offence. Unable to put up their prayers in the temples, which were closed against them, they prostrated themselves before a turf-formed altar, raised under the shade of vines and overhanging shrubs. It was in such moments of enthusiastic piety, when far from the execrable passions of those who had persecuted, and the cowardly abandonment of those who had betrayed him—in the arms of his lovely bride, and in the presence of his God, that Robert composed those hymns which are to this day chaunted in the service of the church.

Bertha, while listening to these sacred songs, smiled on the inspiration and the eloquence of the royal bard; but the transient gleam of pleasure was little in unison with the big tear floating on her azure eye, and was soon overcast by the cloud of grief uprising from her heart. Frequently starting from some dream of terror, she would quit the couch where Robert slept, in the calm produced by conscious virtue, and dignified by strength of mind. Burning in the fever of her agitation, she would rush into the freshness of the summer air, and give a free course to the expression of her woe in the midst of the magnificent desolation around her. Pacing, with irregular steps, the lofty galleries, or seated at an open casement, her throbbing head supported on her clasped hands, she would pass whole weary hours, her tears flowing, and her sighs mingling with the mournful breeze which swept along the vast and solitary corridors. Thousands of conflicting thoughts crossed her mind in rapid succession: wishes, abandoned as soon as formed; designs, projected and cast aside; prayers, put up in hope and recalled in despondency! Sometimes she determined to undertake a pilgrimage to Rome, on foot and alone, for no one dared conduct her; to throw herself at the feet of the Pope, and conjure him to revoke the sentence. Sometimes she resolved to fly, unknown, from the husband and the country to

whom she had brought such misery; to shut herself up in some obscure monastery, or some hermitage in the midst of a dreary desert. But the idea of quitting forever the only object of her earthly affections, without even the agonized enjoyment of a last farewell, made her tremble with terror and despair.

These agitating reveries were often interrupted by the opening morning; and the luxuriant colouring, reflected from the heavens upon the face of rejoicing nature, was in a measure spread over her who formed at first so striking a contrast to its brilliancy. The sky, gradually covered with the glowing tints of the dawn; the clouds, reflecting the purple and azure colouring; the glittering dewdrops, bathing the opening flowers; the birds warbling in the groves, and the skylark mounting into the air, from the bosom of those fertile fields which are now occupied by the palace and its courts; all these images of happiness insensibly spread their influence over the soul of Bertha, and removed for a while her sad presentiments. Her feelings, so long harassed by perplexity and anguish, re-opened to the rays of hope. Young and lovely as she was pure, without remorse, possessing her husband still, a secret feeling seemed to say that her happy hours were not for ever flown, but that peace and comfort were yet in store for her. Then, with a smile lighting her eyes and playing round her lips, she flew to meet him, whose kisses quickly dissipated the traces of her tears. These chaste caresses, the harmonious sounds of her lyre, the roses with which she ornamented her hair, the transports of that age whose brief enjoyments are regretted for ever, this essence of delight evaporating in the fire of youth and love, all plunged them into a temporary delirium of joy. Little then did they consider the pomp from which they were hurled, or the venal homage of the court which they had lost. Persecuted on earth, they seemed to have taken refuge in the heavens.

But the continual struggle between hope and fear, the torments of imagination and internal suffering, injured every hour the health of the queen. The fruit of love which she carried in her bosom was withered ere

it ripened, and a premature delivery robbed her and her husband of their greatest hope. Ignorance and superstition, lending their aid to more criminal feelings, quickly spread the report, that Bertha had brought forth a monster of hideous deformity; and the people were worked upon to believe that God had permitted this prodigy to punish Robert for his disobedience. This conviction removed, in a great measure, the sympathy with which they had hitherto regarded, and, in some degree, consoled, their unhappy monarch.

The Pope, finding that all these accumulated miseries were insufficient to shake the faith which the youthful couple had sworn, and which each access of misfortune seemed to bind more firmly, resolved on still more rigorous means; and, visiting on thousands the imagined guilt of one pair, he excommunicated all France, and put the whole kingdom in interdict!

Then came the height of desolation and despair. No class was exempt from the terrible effects of this horrid denouncement. The inhabitants of the fields feared to enter on their culture, lest the seeds should turn to poison, or the fire of heaven consume their ripening harvest. No merchant ventured to equip a vessel, or any sailor to put to sea, apprehensive that the virgin, who had hitherto received the prayers of the mariner, would no longer lend them her protection, and that the combinations of wave and wind would drive them to destruction. Warriors no longer took up arms, but with a secret terror by which they were half vanquished; for they dreaded that the God of armies would abandon their banners, and banish the natural valour which was wont to fire their bosoms.

Consternation and suffering were not less felt by the citizens of the towns, debarred the privilege of those sacraments which at that time ratified the most important acts of social intercourse. There was a total proscription of marriage, baptism, burial, or pilgrimage. At every moment were seen to arrive at the church gates, which they might not enter, lovers, who came to implore the nuptial benediction; mothers, who carried their newborn offspring, to wash away in the sacred

font the stains of original sin; families, covered with mourning-mantles and weeping over the unburied corpse of a parent or friend; pious children or faithful virgins, seeking to light the taper of hope at the altar of their patron saint, or tell the blessed beads of their rosary to solicit the safe return of a father or a lover; the sick and infirm, certain of cure if they could but pass under the shrine of miracles,—but all was vain. The sanctuaries were closed; and the inflexible ministers of God, profaning his name to purposes so impious, forced the crowds from the deserted temples, to shout forth before the residence of their king, curses, accusations, and threats.

When Robert saw, from the windows of his apartments, the courts filled with these unfortunates; when he saw their various processions, their grief, their wasted and miserable looks, caused by unavailing fastings and penance; when he beheld on all sides of the avenues leading to the palace, hearses with their load of death, or litters covered with some dying wretches, while hundreds of hands were raised towards him in menace or supplication, unable longer to resist, he decided on separating from his wife. But when, turning again from the hideous spectacle presented by this despairing multitude, his eyes caught the distant figure of his beloved one, slowly pacing some garden walk far distant from the direful tumult, he felt that he could not part from her but with life, and he refused to listen to the barbarians who demanded a sacrifice which he felt to be impossible.

But this sacrifice at length took place! Robert yielded not, but Bertha was overpowered by the conflict; and summoned in one decisive resolution the united energies of virtue, religion, and despair. She flung herself abruptly before her husband, in a moment when he was wholly unprepared, and her anguish burst forth in the following address:—"Adieu, Robert! adieu my beloved! While misfortune pressed upon us alone, our mutual suffering gave mutual strength to resist it; but, alas! what avails the tenderness and faith of two lovers, abandoned by heaven and earth, for the miseries of

these innocent citizens suffering for it! If I weep, your looks are sufficient to dry up my tears. Before my smile, your griefs evaporate. But this balm of love, distilling from the very wounds which it has thus the power to heal, is without any virtue for the ulcerated hearts of our unhappy subjects, victims of an obstinacy of which we only enjoy the delights. Adieu, Robert! stripped of the mantle of penitence, and rehabited in the royal purple, remount your throne, more splendid and greater than before! Light of my early days! you whom the clouds of my destiny have too long obscured, shed once more your lustre upon delighted France, and let the darkness which now covers her be wholly centred in me, and no longer envelope the monarch and his people! Adieu, Robert! adieu, my king! my husband! my friend! Alas! is it at the moment of losing all for ever that I recall so many titles? But calm thy grief; thou whose voice has so often thrilled through my frame. This parting word, fatal as it seems, must sooner or later be pronounced by those who are most happy. Death, as cruel as the tyranny which tears us from each other, would, in a very few years, have inevitably snatched one of us away. Alas! it is in this moment that I feel, in the unutterable force of my affection, that nothing which has limits is sufficient for immortal love, and that it is not in this world that lovers should build their hopes. But, alas! alas! what frightful recollections shoot in anguish through my brain! Unfortunate that I am, I dare to speak of an hereafter, the hopes of which are forbidden to us! O God! O God! are we then cursed for all eternity?—Parting in this life, are we then severed for ever and ever?"

Unable to proceed, her voice was stifled with sobs, and uttered only confused and inarticulate sounds.

Robert, plunged in stupor, neither saw nor heard; and, without uttering a word, he clasped in his hands the trembling hands of his wife. She would, by a last effort, again have spoken, but could not. She cast her eyes upon her husband, and then up to heaven; when, covering her face with her veil, she passed with a hurried

step through the porticos where the people had taken their accustomed place. Robert sprang from the lethargic agony which for a moment rendered him insensible, and strove in vain to oppose her departure. She had already disappeared in the crowd, which flinging themselves at the feet of the king, embracing his knees, and clinging to his garments, prevented his following her steps.

The news of the separation ran with lightning-speed through Paris and the neighbouring hamlets; while the reconciled church instantly proclaimed indulgence and remission. Bertha, having hurried the momentary preparations for departure, mounted a car drawn by three coursers; and with an humble escort, took the route to Burgundy.

Passing unobserved through the city, she saw the delighted Parisians, dressed in their holiday suits, embracing, congratulating, and commencing once again the round of their pleasures. The greatest number were rushing towards the open churches, singing hymns of gratitude and joy, in which the name of Bertha was mingled with that of Heaven, which had inspired her with her desperate and unlooked-for resolution.

In one place she encountered a group of smiling friends conducting two expectant lovers, on the point of sanctifying their passion at the foot of the altar: she looked on them, and felt that she was never to taste the delights of wedded love! She met, again, pious mothers, who hastened to present their children for the baptism so long denied them; and she felt that her heart would never throb to the exquisite charms of maternal tenderness! A little further a funeral train crossed her path; when, throwing a long and desiring look upon the bier, "There, there," she cried, "is *my* hope!"

She passed the suburbs of the ancient Lutetia. Arrived on the heights, where, since then the melancholy Bicêtre erected its guilt-stained walls, but where nothing was at that time to be seen but a wood of cypress, she stopped to gaze once more on the city which contained her earthly all. She heard the distant sounds of glad-

ness celebrating her departure. She wiped away the tears which started to her eyes, and strove to distinguish on the vapoury horizon the roof of the Palace Valvert and the trees of its gardens. Her eyes refused to perform their office—all was a floating mass of undistinguishable objects. She turned away, and with a bursting heart quitted the spot for ever.

END OF VOL. I.

THE VETERAN.

It was exactly ten years from the day on which I had last parted with my old acquaintance, Phil Hartigan, when I happened to arrive at the very spot where that parting interview took place. This was a fourth-rate town in one of the northern departments of France, in the very heart of the coal country close on the borders of Belgium, where Captain Hartigan had been cantoned, for some time previous to the final removal of the British army of occupation.

My acquaintance with him commenced at Valenciennes, of the garrison of which place his regiment formed a part; but after about a year's continuance there, he had been detached, with his company, to the little town in question, and to his very great discomfiture. And well he might be annoyed at the change—for never was a military man in pleasanter foreign quarters, as far as English military society in its best sense could make them pleasant, than in that garrison at the time I allude to. In this, I am sure to be borne out, by the memories of all who were there during 1815 and 1816, and who have one and all, I'll be bound, often thought of the balls, the dinners, the private plays, the gayety and good fellowship, that ran through all the seasons in succession. It was early in the summer of the last of those years that I rode over, accompanied by two others, to pass a day with their old comrade, and allay, for never so brief a space, the discontent which broke out, even in the invitation that led to our visit. I have never forgotten the last sentence of poor Phil's note—

"I'm an unfortunate devil: I seem to be stuck in this damned morass for life and death; I am sure it will kill me, so come over like honest fellows as you ought to be, and give me one pleasant day on this side of the grave."

I have called this a *sentence:* it was so, certainly, a sentence of death; but as to any thing like grammatical division, punctuation, or such like pedantries, Phil Hartigan knew nothing of, or, knowing, despised them. He was a very clever fellow for all that, and had received a fair education, (as the phrase goes,) for

the youngest son of an Irish gentleman. He was a good horseman, a steady shot, and tied his own flies. He could, even twenty years after he left shool, write legibly, and read running hand; remembered "Gallia est divisa in tres partes;" "Tityre tu patulæ," and "Arma virumque cano;" the first two problems of Euclid, and full three parts of the Greek alphabet. He was a gallant fellow, full of his profession, in its best and most brilliant parts—so full that he had no room for any of the paltry trickery which cramped and degraded it. He was an extremely handsome man; sung well, with a natural, but uncultivated taste; and although writing a common letter was a matter of infinite difficulty to him, he was the very best teller of a story that I ever listened to. Could he have written as he spoke, he would have been distinguished even in the present spring-tide of authorship, and his best stories would have run no risk of being botched by retail.

Phil Hartigan entered the army young, as young as the regulations permitted; and while yet a boy, was placed in command over men. Without any experience as to human nature, he was intrusted with a duty, for which knowledge of character is the most essential qualification. But he learned his profession, (somewhat at the expense of his soldiers to be sure,) and became in process of time a good officer.

After dodging about in home quarters for some few years, running the rounds of England, Scotland, and Ireland, in all the idleness of domestic duty, he at length entered on foreign service; was one of the expedition to South America, which ended with General Whitelock's ruinous affair; and on his return to Europe, he immediately repaired to Spain, where he remained in constant and active duty till the remnant of the French armies were driven beyond the Pyrenees. After the battle of Toulouse, he was ordered to Canada, where he saw his share of whatever was going on; and recrossed the Atlantic once more, to be in time to get the last of his half dozen wounds in the desperate field of Waterloo. While an ensign, he led a forlorn hope—what a sadly eloquent title!—and in the usual style of reward, he got his lieutenancy—*by seniority*. While a lieutenant he had the uncommon distinction of being noticed by name in the general-in-chief's despatch, and was promoted to a company—*by purchase*. As a captain, he on one occasion was lucky enough to command the battalion in the latter part of a general action, and was sure to obtain his brevet as major—when it might regularly come to *his turn*.

In fact, Phil Hartigan, like hundreds of fine fellows, had often distinguished himself, paid the last shilling of his little fortune for

the commission he bore, left his track in his own and the enemy's blood, wherever he served; but never had the good luck to obtain a prize in the lottery of military life, which (like other lotteries) makes a fine display of five, ten, and twenty thousand pounders, while ninety-nine out of every hundred of its expectant dupes, fire nothing but *blank* cartridge, from beginning to end of their career. It was thus with Phil Hartigan, who after twenty years' service, eleven campaigns, sieges, battles, and skirmishes without number; his body riddled, one arm disabled, bones and muscles shattered, and a constitution *shaken*, found himself stuck fast in his little cantonment, from which he never stirred, until he sunk in his narrow billet in its rustic burying-ground.

The day that I and my companion rode over to see him was a fine one in June, and as we walked our horses into the town, we heard a considerable clamour towards the market-place. We trotted in that direction, and the first thing that struck us was the fine figure of Phil, in a crowd of town's-people which surrounded a squad of four or five Cossacks, who had rode into the market, got drunk in a cabaret, and were quarrelling together and belabouring each other unmercifully, with the short thick whips attached to their bridles. These savages did not lay on each other more ferociously than did some cowardly scoundrels of the town lay on *them*, when two or three of them were tumbled from their ponies and lay sprawling on the ground. All the enmity of the vanquished broke out, and the Cossacks would have been roughly handled indeed, had not a gallant ally been ready, in the person of the English captain, who instantly interfered, wielding his good arm powerfully, and making most unceremonious applications with the toe of his boot to the rearward demonstrations of the flying enemy, some dozens of whom ran before him in electrical dismay.

When the captain saw us he ceased from his labours, and joined heartily in the laugh which burst from us on observing the affair. The remounted Cossacks grinned forth their alliance with our jocularity, and charged through the streets at full gallop, upsetting (but happily not hurting) man, woman, and child, vegetables, fruit, and poultry, without distinction. The crowd dispersed by sneaking units, like a cloud dissolving in single drops, and we repaired to the auberge where Phil was quartered, gave our horses in charge to his groom, and prepared with good appetites to attack the capital dinner which had been prepared for us. We passed the evening as usual on such occasions—drinking, singing, joking, picking broiled bones to revive our thirst, and swallowing fresh bumpers to excite new appetite. What a strange vision to look back upon are the scenes of early dissipation, passed

in such orgies as these! How the days, and nights, and years all seem to swim and revolve before one, as the bottles and glasses did then! How pleasant, how profitless were those times! Yet not quite profitless either, if their recollection teaches us to relish the less highly spiced enjoyments of our after life.

We quitted Phil Hartigan and his desolate cantonment the next morning. We cantered off after breakfast, on our return to Valenciennes; and as we left the town, we threw back a Parthian glance at our solitary friend, who stood (his little white terrier Snap at his heels,) looking after us, waving his cap, cheering us, and striving to cheer himself, with a view halloo, such as used to make the Kilworth mountains ring, when he followed his father's fox-hounds. We all remarked what a fine looking fellow he was at that parting moment, his black hair and whiskers curling gracefully, his cheeks flushed, and his whole appearance, such as we often see in florid-complexioned hard livers of five and thirty, or thereabouts, who have not begun to *break*. But when the break at last comes, in such good wearing constitutions, what a crash it is.

We returned Phil Hartigan's shout of salutation, entered a wood, lost sight of the town, and thus ended our visit.

It was just ten years from that day that I happened to arrive on that very spot. It was far out of the way of any reasonable purpose of mine; and I scarcely know what led me there, if it were not "a truant disposition," such as brought Horatio to Wittenburg. I had straggled over a good part of the ancient province of Artois, and made pilgrimages to one or two shrines, which turned out scarcely worth the trouble. One of these was what is called in traditional phrase, the *ruins* of Thérouanne, an unfortunate town utterly destroyed by Charles V., in the year 1553. So completely has time followed the tracks of the ruthless conqueror, that no other trace but theirs is left, instead of what was once a rich and populous garrison. Not a stone is to be found, whose juxtaposition with another could tell to what structure they formerly belonged. Not a vestige is discoverable of the habitations of men; yet the peasant cicerones of the wretched village, which now bears the name of the town that was, talk of the cathedral and the citadel, the tower and the church, of this, that, and t'other saint, but can *show* the traveller nothing but a cultivated ravine, which speaks itself to have been the ancient *fossée* that surrounded the place. Marius at Carthage, or Volney at Palmyra, had more positive, but not more convincing evidence of desolation. It is the very site for a philosopher to build on, but tells little to the antiquary, and still less to the sketcher of scenes or manners. When I walked across the

bleak and barren heights, which agriculture has not yet succeeded to redeem, a husbandman was driving his ploughshare into the ungrateful soil, and a sportsman and his dog ranging over fields, that could not produce sufficient grass to shelter a covey of birds.

I, too, had my gun in my hand, and my dog at my foot; but there was no business for either of us there. Three bipeds and a brace of setters formed a population too great for the surface which formerly sufficed for thousands.

Looking to the eastward, I was instantly struck with the notion of paying a visit to some of the not distant scenes of by-gone pleasures, or what passed current for such. I accordingly hurried off from these dreary heights, and took the road to Lille, followed close by Carlo, the son of Ranger—the reader will not require me to trace his pedigree farther.

The church clock was striking twelve (at noon) as I walked into the church of Phil Hartigan's cantonment. The sun shone strongly on the little place, and brightened up his naturally gloomy features into something like a smile. But it was a melancholy vivacity. I looked along the street, and thought of the figure of poor Hartigan, as I had last seen him, and I thought of my two other companions, who had been dead several years, the one a victim to a West India fever, the other killed in a duel. Recollection became unpleasant. I regretted having returned to the place; and was half tempted to retrace my steps, when I was arrested by two shapes, most startling and questionable. These were a man and a dog; the first presenting a broken outline of Phil Hartigan, the latter a worn down resemblance of his terrier Snap.

"How very strange!" said I, stopping suddenly. The person I gazed at, stood still also, fixing his eyes on me.

"How devilish odd!" exclaimed he.

"Can it be credible?" uttered I.

"It isn't possible!" muttered he; but odd, strange, incredible or impossible as we might have thought it, it was nevertheless true, that Phil Hartigan and myself were in an instant cordially shaking hands; while old Snap and young Carlo seemed to acknowledge each other as acquaintances, perhaps from some friendly or filial instinct, connected with the memory of poor old Ranger, who had been for some time dead and gone.

"My dear fellow! How glad I am to see you! How extraordinary! How time flies! How devilish fat you are grown!" were Phil's first exclamations.

"Do you think so?" said I, squeezing myself inwardly up, with the usual sensitiveness of corpulent men, striving to shrink into themselves. These were the only words I spoke for many

minutes, while Phil ran on with a voluble string of question and answer, salutation and exclamation.

I was not more surprised at first view of him, than I was on the closer scrutiny on which I entered. I could not convince myself for a moment or two, that I was not looking at Phil Hartigan's father, or his uncle, or an elder, a much elder brother, or I scarcely knew to whom or what—but could this be Phil Hartigan himself? Could ten years have so completely changed, so broken, so decomposed him? Where were his black curls, and his black whiskers? The first were cut away by the scythe of Time, which sorrow had sharpened; the latter were shaved off by Phil's own razors, because they had grown gray. And his florid complexion? Disease and dissipation had first faded and then dyed it a yellow ground, with purple spots; his eyes were sunk, his forehead wrinkled, his cheeks hollow; and if *I* had grown fat, how had poor Phil grown thin! He was the mere shadow of his former self. A blue frock, of military cut (plainly a turn-coat, the first that Phil ever suffered to embrace him,) was tightly buttoned up to his chin, and the reverted cape was fastened even higher, with a hook and eye. Heaven knows what was the quality or colour of his shirt; but his rusty black handkerchief was surmounted by a stiff white *collar*, flanking his countenance on either side, and silencing any battery which inquisitiveness might direct against him. A brown cloth foraging cap covered his head, without concealing the baldness of his temples; and a pair of threadbare pantaloons, gray worsted stockings, and well worn shoes, brought the picture down as far as it could go.

Such were the outworks of the once gay, handsome, dashing Phil Hartigan. His worn-down body was the covered way, his still open wounds the embrasures, his gallant spirit the rampart, and his heart the citadel, of this mortal type of some strong place, which the enemy had reduced by sap, but which had been impregnable to assault.

Having recovered from my astonishment, and suppressing it as best I could, the first burst of recognition over, we walked together towards the market-place.

"Why, my dear fellow," exclaimed Phil, "it 's a perfect age since I saw you last."

"It is indeed a long time," answered I.

"Why, let me see—it must be six or seven years?"

"Ten, my dear Phil, *ten* this very day."

"Ten years! why, how can that be? you must be wrong—it can't be more than *eight*, at any rate?"

"I 'll easily prove it—it was in 1816, I came over from Valen-

"By Jove, so it was!"

"And it is now 1826."

"By Jove, so it is!"

The "was" and the "is" had exactly the same emphasis, and it appeared as if the past and the present date were alike confused in my poor friend's head.

"And my old comrades, Butler and Wendburne? How do they get on?" resumed he.

"Get on! poor fellows, they are dead this many a day."

"Indeed! then the world's a pair of good fellows the less," was the careless reply, which seemed to tell that time had carried away feeling, as well as memory in its flight.

As we walked on, I was amused by the appearance of Snap, who had too evidently moved in a parallel line to that which his master had so rapidly taken down the hill—of life, I mean. Snap, who had been originally of a youthful white, was now of a dusky gray, his ears, and parts of his neck and back, showed patches of flesh-coloured baldness. He was blind of one eye; extremely deaf; and altogether a venerable specimen of half-pay terriers, on the superannuated list. His master observed me eyeing him; and he asked me if "I did not think poor Snap greatly altered?"

"And his master!" said I to *myself;* but I *answered* Phil's question, without any personal reference. He had shifted his quarters from the *Auberge* to a small apartment, consisting of two chambers, in the house of an old woman called Madame Penelope, in a narrow street near the market-place. At sight of the house, I easily divined that it was poverty which gave to the unlucky veteran the route from his former comfortable sojourn. The abode into which he now ushered me was a sad contrast to the other; quite as much so as poor Hartigan was to what he had been. Yet notwithstanding the breaking up in health, appearance, manners, and even feelings, Phil had saved something from the wreck. His natural character was unharmed, as every thing about him gave evidence. His bed room was neat, and his little *salon* adjoining it, displayed some of the nicknacks of military collection, that he was formerly so fond of. In fact the whole air of the place spoke the habits of soldier regularity, with somewhat of old bachelor precision. The articles of the veteran's scanty wardrobe were folded and laid on their shelf, snugly covered with a cloth, to keep off the dust: though had it lain thickly on most of them, it would have been but nearly the same thing as "ashes to ashes." On nails over the chimney place were arranged the old sabre, the battered breast-plate, and the gorget, which had all served so many campaigns, and given or received so many hard knocks. A pair of moccassins or Cana-

dian slippers, were hung one at each side of these; and those again flanked by a South American buffalo hunter's leathern belt, and a pair of Spanish castenets. An Indian warrior's cap surrounded the whole; and the veteran's own old sash was festooned among them. On the mantlepiece lay several relics, picked up in the various countries where he had served; and the walls were covered with bows and arrows, snow shoes, and divers articles of costume or implements of warfare; while a rusty gun and cobweb-covered fishing rod, showed plainly that their owner had for many a day "foregone all customs of exercise."

After an oft-repeated welcome, and an offer of a dram, (which on my declining, my host took for himself,) he left me for a while to discuss with his landlady (who was also his housekeeper, chamber-maid, and cook) the preparation for dinner; and then to step over and give notice of my arrival to his messmate and only companion in the place. This was Toby Underwood, a half-pay lieutenant of marines, a very old ally who had joined company with Phil, and settled in this dull place out of pure compassion, and who was, he also assured me, "as brave and as safe a fellow as ever stood before a foe, or sat down beside a friend."

When I was thus left alone, I employed myself, in the usual way of killing time in a strange room, looking at every article it contained with a listless scrutiny. Had I been disposed to indulge the moralizing mood, I should have stood ruminating before the different objects of *virtu*, which brought so many associations connected with days of yore. But I preferred thumbing over poor Phil's library, which I found (without the aid of a catalogue) to consist of a copy of "Joe Miller's Jest Book;" one of the "Rules and Regulations," much torn; one number of Mrs. Inchbald's "British Theatre," the frontispiece stained with wine; an army list for November, 1816," the red cover wanting; and a volume of "Blair's Lectures," an old edition—but quite as good as new. There was also a "Navy List," of rather a later date, a tract on the "Dry Rot," and "The Midshipman's Manual," or some such title; but these latter had the name "Tobias Underwood" written on them, too plainly to let me mistake them for Phil Hartigan's.

I chose the old army list for my reading, and I saw how closely and constantly poor Phil had made it his study Every page bore marginal notes. They were necessarily brief, from the narrow space which so edifyingly contrasts these monthly records with other modern works, to the full as ephemeral. A little *d*, or *k*, or *p*, before many of the names, denoted "*dead*," "*killed*," "*promoted*," as was corroborated by my own knowledge of the men and their fate; and these brief annotations formed a praiseworthy pattern of what ought to be the style of

commentators in general. The *p's*, I was sorry to observe, bore a very small proportion to the *d's* and *k's*. I did not care to pursue the calculation, or to dwell on the probable chances of poor Phil himself becoming entitled to *d* and *b* (dead and buried) before his name, long ere the arrival of "the brevet," which he so reckoned on, as sure to put him among the *p's*.

He soon returned to me; and we went to stroll up and down the narrow walk lined with stunted limes, named by the amorous natives the "Allée d'Amour," but which Phil called familiarly "the Mall." He could tell the measurement of this miserable promenade to an inch, and knew every knot in each individual tree, while he had worn a way, by his regular pacing to and fro, as deep, though not so lasting, as that indented in the aisle of Canterbury Cathedral by the pilgrims to the shrine of Thomas à Becket.

During this stroll, and the "half hour" before dinner, and the additional *quarter*, allowed to the cook in all countries, I became fully informed of my companion's circumstances and sufferings since the day I had seen him last His tale was easily told, but not his comments on it; for he bewailed the hardship of his case at great length, and with that fluent bitterness which few, but those who have themselves suffered, can sympathize with, as well as listen to. It was soon after the period of my former visit in 1816, that Captain Hartigan, coming within the reductions which took place in the army, found that he was on the point of being thrown out of his profession, and on the world, with his half-pay as his only support; for he had no capability of adding to it in any way to which a gentleman could condescend, at least, according to his notions of the thing. The nation called for retrenchment, and it fell upon those who might have been spared, by the sacrifice of a few sinecures. But the adopted species of economy (which was neither political nor politic) deprived poor Phil, with many a fellow-sufferer, of the pension to which two of his wounds had for several years entitled him, and which he had foolishly believed was granted for life. So that at the moment of his pay, his allowances, and means of living were reduced one half, he was also cut off from his pension; and thus an income, which to a bachelor soldier was really affluence, became suddenly exchanged for one which was little more than penury. But even the integrity of this pittance was not respected by the tailors, and brokers, and creditors of all kinds, who had long encouraged the unthinking debtor to go deeper and deeper into debt, and never asked for one guinea, while he could have easily paid them; but now all at once insist-

ed on receiving every shilling of their exorbitant demands, when he had not a penny too much for his bare support.

Phil entered into a short examination of his affairs, which he had not done for twenty years, that is to say, since he had had any affairs to examine. He found himself encumbered beyond all chance of extrication; he was dunned and threatened with complaints to the Horse Guards, and public exposure of all kinds, in the insolent language which low fellows delight in having an opportunity to use towards a gentleman. Phil was an honourable man; he did all he could do; he offered the best compromise in his power, and he made over the half of his half-pay to liquidate all demands. This was indeed a forlorn hope, more hopeless than the one he escaped from fifteen years before. The annual fund raised in this way was "a sinking fund," that interest, costs, postage, and commission, could never allow to rise. But Phil always looked forward to "the Brevet;" it was, to be sure, a long time before that could arrive; but looking back with wonder on the rapid flight of years gone by, he thought that those to come would pass over as quickly. He did not yet know the drawling pace of time, that is linked with suffering and followed by disappointment.

Year after year rolled on, till hope was utterly chilled and blighted. Without society or any other solace for his long career of dissipated delight, Phil Hartigan, retrograded in morals as he advanced in years. Hard drinking succeeded to good fellowship, and brought all the terrible evils that invariably follow in its train. The constitution thus assailed surrendered at discretion, or rather without any, for the prudence of a drunkard is analogous to the "*Pain à discretion*" of a Frenchman, who is *that* article possesses none whatever. But I must not lean heavily on poor Phil; I seem to tread on his grave.

The reduced veteran did not, however, all at once sink into despondency, and to the last he never despaired. He memorialed, and petitioned, "ever prayed," and always *hoped*. His applications to be put on full pay met with instant attention—a constant refusal. He had, in fact, no interest; and the royal chief at the head of the army, could not, with the very best intentions, accede to the requests of all the claimants that formed its tail. When Phil prayed for the continuance of his pension, he was politely invited to exhibit his wounds before the Medical Board; but it not being *moveable* as well as medical, that was impossible. Phil could not show himself in London: the Board was fixed there—and neither Mahomet nor the mountain stirred an inch.

Thus affairs stood at a dead halt for several years, and Phil was sinking fast, when his old acquaintance, Toby Underwood, himself on half-pay, mutilated, and with small resources, came over on a visit to his friend. Toby found the place quite as good as any other for his purposes; thought Phil Hartigan better than most men for a companion; and discovered the brandy to be far the best he had ever procured for so little money. A close compact was accordingly entered into between the invalided warriors; and an alliance offensive, and defensive, against sorrow of all sorts and devils of every colour, from the coal-black leg of a broiled turkey, to the very *bluest* that ever blazed in a bowl of burnt brandy. The partnership answered extremely well; there was a perfect union of interests, no disproportion of capital, and consequently no elements of discord. The associates thought very nearly alike on all subjects of interest to them; abused the government that left them unpromoted, and mutually forgot that there are men so exclusively suited by nature for subordinate stations, that advancement to places for which they have no capacity is the greatest evil which can befall them. On two points of serious controversy among the best friends, politics and religion, neither Phil nor Toby ran risk of clashing in opinion, because on those points they had but one between them. They reciprocally thought that politics, was but another name for corruption, and religion for hypocrisy. With the townspeople, the messmates maintained a high ground, and they were much respected. This may be thought curious enough, for two men who had together only a crown a day to spend; the secret was they spent *no more* than they had. The contrary is paradoxical, and, I must acknowledge, somewhat Irish, not only in expression, but in practice.

I was formally presented to Toby by our mutual friend. I found him a blunt, good tempered North of England man, with a wooden leg, a fair knowledge of the world he had moved in, but not a person to make discoveries. A marine is naturally an amphibious animal. He can live very well on land, and if hard pressed there, he takes to the water. Such a man, if at all intelligent, ought to be a pleasant mixture of *both;* Toby was so in effect, just like a glass of his own grog, half and half. He told several good anecdotes of service at sea and on shore; and might have pass-

ed for a capital *raconteur* (in the best meaning of the term), had he not been utterly eclipsed by Phil Hartigan.

No sooner was dinner over, and Phil's heart warmed with a couple of bumpers of strong liqueur, and a bottle of Burgundy, than he began to open out, like other night flowers, in full fragrance. He by degrees unfolded the leaves of recollection (in vulgar analogy "the tablet of memory"); and by the time the wine bottles had abdicated in favour of the brandy flask, he had completely resumed possession of his old character, and burst out in as dazzling a display of story-telling as ever shone upon a night of conviviality. This was Phil Hartigan's peculiar talent. I never heard him say what is called a *good thing*. He knew nothing of repartee, or punning. But give him a story, ever so trifling, and from his unique power of description, and of mimicry, in idoms, accent, and pronunciation, he made more of it than ever may be made by another.

On the night I speak of, he told several of his stories—they were all old ones, but not a bit the worse for wear. His memory was as good as ever, and it was all the same to him whether he handled a grave or a gay subject. Toby Underwood had heard all these stories oftener even than I had. Still he laughed at some of them, as though they had been bran-new; and actually wept at others—but not till after his second bottle and sixth tumbler.

Daylight had fairly extinguished our candles before we broke up. At length Toby departed for his lodgings, and Phil retired to bed, having first seen me snugly settled on the stretcher which was prepared for me in the *salon*. I had drunk but little in proportion to my companions; and Phil made me many a reproach for having become a *flincher*.

"That's what a man is sure to come to by living in this damned country—isn't it, Toby?" said Phil, filling his glass.

"Indeed it is," answered Toby, emptying *his*.

"It will be our fate too, I suppose," added Phil, swallowing a bumper.

"Not before 'the Brevet,'" thought I.

"Ay, and mine, no doubt, *after all*," rejoined Toby, replenishing his tumbler.

"But not sooner," thought I.

In consequence of my abstinence I had three or four

hours of sound sleep, and got up quite refreshed. There was no chance of Phil's rising, for he snored audibly in the room beside me. I was at a loss what to do. The library and the museum could afford me no novelty; so I pryed about, into every hole and corner of the *salon*, in search of some unexamined object. The only thing I discovered was a little mahogany box. It being unlocked, I was induced to open it, supposing it to contain some little token of curiosity, a wild boar's tusk, or some such matter of foreign extraction. But all the earth's collections of natural philosophy or comparative anatomy combined, could not have so surprised, so interested, or so affected me, as did the contents of poor Phil Hartigan's mahogany box, and the simple inscription which labelled the papers that enfolded them. On the outer envelope was written,

"Fragments of an old soldier."

And on the separate little parcels within this cover,

"No. 1, Bones of my Leg, Monte Video."

"No. 2, Bones of my Head, Talavera."

"No. 3, Bones of my Arm, Badajos."

A heavier paper, containing a flattened bullet wrapped in cotton, was inscribed,

"No. 4, Ball cut out at Waterloo."

These relics of long service and long suffering, caused me a feeling of deep melancholy, which all the efforts of their owner and his messmate could not remove. I passed the day sadly, and the succeeding night no better. As soon as the bottle began to circulate after dinner, Phil acknowledged the inspiration, and returned to the track of his natural vivacity; but his stories seemed to have lost their pleasant flavour. Their gaiety was no longer gay, and their sadness was more sad than ever. I could not rouse myself to a free participation in the nightly enjoyments of the poor fellow whose days were so utterly comfortless; and I found that to prolong my visit would be to increase my discomfort. On the third morning, therefore, I took my leave, promising, and faithfully intending, to renew my visit ere long, with strong hopes of being able to realize a project for digging poor Phil out of his solitary station, and transplanting him to a more social soil.

Phil shook my hand cordially as we parted, entreated me to return soon to see him, assured me that he should not re-

main much longer where he was, as "the brevet" was sure to give him his promotion almost immediately.

Within a month from that day I received a letter, written on coarse paper, with a broad patch of common black sealing wax, bearing the impression of an anchor, surmounted by a firelock, like a crest over a coat of arms. It was as follows:—

"DEAR SIR,

"YOU will regret to learn that our poor friend Phil. Hartigan was buried this morning. He died two days ago, rather suddenly, of what the doctor calls a breaking up of the system. I think it was his heart that was broken. He was as brave and pleasant a fellow as ever lived or died; but you know that as well as I can tell it. Our poor friend requested me to write to you as soon as all was over. I had him buried as respectably as I could, and I thought it but right that the little box of his splintered bones, which he had so carefully preserved, should be laid in the coffin with his other remains. "I am, Dear Sir,

"Yours truly,

"TOBIAS UNDERWOOD."

"P. S. Snap died about a week before his master."

I was not a little shocked on reading this letter. The suddenness of the news was aggravated by the fact that I had just completed an arrangement for poor Hartigan's change of residence to the place I had contemplated. But it was, perhaps, better that he should have died where he did, where so little existed to cause a regret for the world he quitted.

His grave is marked by a small stone with his name cut on it, followed by some half dozen lines, telling truly the good qualities he possessed. How few, if any, of his many acquaintances, companions, and friends, will ever see the spot, or read his epitaph!

I have thrown loosely on paper a few of his anecdotes, from recollection, which suffices for the outline, but cannot attempt the filling up. These will be scarcely recognized for poor Phil's spirited sketches, by those who have heard them in his original recital. They always, in fact, appeared to me as fitter to be told by the tongue than the pen. But the great majority of my readers have never heard them, as I have, and may pardon the imperfections of which they do not know the extent.

NO FIRE! NO FIRE!

I once happened to be stationed with a small detachment in a secluded village in the south of Ireland; one of those romantic and wild positions which abound in that country, fit theatres for the display of every feeling that agitates mankind in its half civilized state. The district was disturbed. Nightly outrages, by wretched marauders, whom misery made desperate, kept the scanty gentry and simple peasantry in perpetual alarm, and myself and my party in constant preparation. Sudden attacks on small military posts were frequent, and even daylight was not always a security against the daring attempts of Caravats and Shanavests—the distinctive appellations of the insurgents of those days.

The little barrack occupied by me and my detachment stood on the road side, at the entrance to the village, and was fronted by a thick wood, which stretched along the opposite hills, and came down in a mass of shadow to the very road. A narrow lane that led into its heart opened upon the road, some twenty yards from the barrack. This outlet was the chief point of suspicion for the wary eye of the sentries, who, day and night, paced before the door; and the frequent report of musket shots from the wood, made the recruits of whom my little party was chiefly formed, give many a hurried glance and take many a rapid turn, as on their hours of duty they walked close to the neighbourhood of that convenient spot for treachery and ambush.

It was one day in October, that I was on the point of sallying out, my gun in hand, and my dog at my heel, to take my usual hour or two of sport in the wood and on its skirts,

when a very sudden and heavy shower of rain forced me to pause for awhile at the door, and drove the sentry, a raw, unfledged hero of about seventeen, into his box. The three or four little messes into which my detachment was formed, were just sitting down to their early dinner, and I was rather amused by the hungry impatience with which one of the groups inquired for their mess-woman, Mrs. Merryweather, a comely hen cockney, hatched in Shoreditch, and the veteran dignity with which the corporal, her husband, repressed their voraciousness, assuring them she would be back with a table-cloth from its drying place on the hedge which skirted the lane, before the beef and potatoes could be ready,

At the very instant of this explanation, a piercing scream from the throat of this identical Mrs. Merryweather, struck upon my ear, and was followed by the terrified woman herself flying from the lane, the drenched table cloth held up before her, like a sail to the wind, and her dripping hair floating behind. Young O'Toole, the sentry, as he heard and saw her appalling voice and form, bounded electrically out of his box, and with fixed eyes and fixed bayonet stood shaking in every joint.

"What the devil is it, for the love of Jasus, Mrs. Merryweather?" cried he. "Turn out the guard, turn out the guard!"

"Yes, yes, the devil, the devil," screamed Mrs. Merryweather, "the devil or the vild, orrid, Hirish brutes coming to murder, burn, and violate us hall!" and as the three or four men composing the guard tumbled out, hastily seizing their arms, she flung herself into the embrace of the corporal, who had rushed into the road with the whole open-mouthed detachment, men, women, and children. Shouts now issued from the wood, and an attack seemed certain. I cocked my gun, and advanced, followed by the guard. Approaching the shaking sentinel, I sternly asked him,

"What, O'Toole, are you trembling?"

"Is it trembling, your honour?" replied he; "then if I am, it's trembling to be at them."

At this moment a figure rushed from the wood, frightful at first sight and shocking on examination. It was that of a man, tall, gaunt, and middle aged. Fever was on his lip and madness in his eye. His hollowed cheeks, bushy beard, and matted hair, spoke disease, neglect and misery; and the wild glance which rolled backwards as he tottered towards me,

gave evidence of maniac imbecility and exhaustion. His right hand grasped a staff, which was useless either for support or offence, while he feebly waved his arm above his head. His body was wrapped in a coarse blanket, girded round his middle by a rope of straw; his emaciated limbs were all bare, with the exception of his left arm, which was enveloped in the rude covering that formed his only shelter against wet and wind.

While the soldiers stood steadily prepared, not merely for the approach of this apparition, but for whatever might follow its movements, the poor wretch fearlessly, or rather unconsciously, moved forwards; and redoubled his pace as about half a dozen ragged village boys, who pursued him with loud shouts, emerged from the lane. Flying from their persecution to the shelter of the barrack, he implored protection with an air so piteously helpless, that even the fears of O'Toole and Mrs. Merryweather died away before the compassionate wonder which irresistibly seized on every bystander. Every one made way for him, and he entered the barrack: and seemingly allured by the savoury fragrance of the diners, he advanced into one of the inner rooms; but, as it seemed to me, in momentary consciousness of his forbidding and forlorn appearance, he shrunk back from the *fire-place*, and crouched low upon a little three legged stool, in the most distant corner. He was immediately surrounded by the kind hearted soldiers and their kinder wives, who, one and all, got over their disgust and fright, and vied with each other in attending to their miserable guest. Large portions of soup, bread and meat, were placed before him, and voraciously devoured, while a murmured utterance of thanks and blessings broke from him at intervals. When his hunger was satiated, I said to him,

"Now, my poor fellow, come warm and dry yourself—get near the fire."

"Oh, no, no," groaned he, in a hollow and shuddering tone—"no fire—no fire!" and, starting up from his sitting posture, he rushed to another corner of the room, into which he huddled himself, putting his face close to the wall, and shivering in the violent impulse of some horrible recollection. This emotion excited in about equal ratios the pity of the men and the terror of the women, thus stamping its alliance with the first and finest elements of that deep-tragic feeling from which it sprung. Perceiving that the coarse

sympathy of the group around him only worried the poor sufferer, I strove with a little more address to soothe his irritation. My efforts succeeded—for after a few minutes he looked gratefully up to me, and exclaimed, in a tone of deep and savage pathos,

"God bless you, and keep you and your's from fire and flame! Look here!" continued he, abruptly, "look here, where it scorched and withered me;" and with gesture and action suiting the words, he drew from beneath his blanket the shrunken and excoriated remnant of his once sinewy arm. The marks of the fierce element were fresh on it—it was scathed and scorched from the shoulder to the wrist—a blasted branch of the decaying stem it hung to.

"Good God! How did this happen, poor creature?" burst from a dozen voices.

"Whist, whist, and I'll tell you," hoarsely whispered the maniac, his finger to his lips; "but say nothing—don't waken them—Norah and the childer are sleeping still—whist! It was—let me see—how many weeks? seven—or eight—or nine—no matter, no matter—but the flax was taken out of the bog-holes, all dry and ready for scutching—the whole roof of the cabin was lined with it—it was like tinder—one spark was enough to set it blazing, and I stuck a whole rush-light against the wall! But I must tell you—that Norah had just been brought to bed—the child was at her breast—God help me! I forget how many days ould it was—but it was at her breast, in the bed wid her—in the little closet—and two more, Biddy and Patrick, were beside her—all, *all* together. I stuck the rush against the wall while I was stripping myself—the wind blew through the wisp of straw in the window—the rush blazed up—the flax caught it—the whole house was in flames—I run into the closet—Norah was crying—and the childer—they were burning—they were smothering—my body and my brain caught fire—I was all blazing—and when I came to my raison *they* were all *cinders!*—house, wife, and childer—every sowl of them—burned—burned—burned! Don't cry—don't cry, my good woman—and the men, too! God bless you all! but all the salt tears in the wide world couldn't put out the flames!———— Where did I leave off! Ay, ay—when I come to my raison—that's three days ago—I was on the big mountains by the sea-side—and I run down then, and threw myself into the broad waves, to quench my

heart that was scorching. But somebody took me out—the faver was gone—and I got my raison !"——

A long pause followed this hurried and harrowing recital. In a few kind words I begged of him to lie down on one of the beds and rest his poor mind and body ; but he sprang up wildly, exclaiming, with a sickening emphasis on the last word,

" Rest myself ! Oh ! no, your honour—I must go *home !*"

" Home !" involuntarily echoed every voice, " home !"

" Ay; indeed, home ! and why not ? Aren't they waiting for me—poor Norah and the childer ! God bless you all—God bless you—let me go, let me go."

I saw it was in vain to oppose reasoning to a wretch who had no longer " discourse of reason." On the contrary, I encouraged him to go—and thus kept him in parley while my servant brought from my room some old and motley garments for decency and comfort sake. But I had not his outfit entirely on my hands, for there was not a man or woman in the barracks who did not offer to contribute something towards the task of clothing him. He was soon equipped—but the grotesque mixture of his half military attire did not raise one smile in the group, from male or female. Blessings and sobs were mixed together in rude eloquence as he left the door ; and just as he started, with my servant for his protector through the village, the sun burst out, a bright arch, like a bended bow, sprang across the heavens, and the maniac's cheerless day of life was gilded by one delusive gleam of hope.

HOME SERVICE:

STARVING MANUFACTURERS AND WARLIKE WEAVERS.

An explosion of manufacturing despair, which suddenly burst out in the northern counties of England, shook the garrisons of some of the remotest towns, and fairly dislodged whole regiments from their quarters. The blowing up of this political powder-mill, was, in fact, felt far and near. Our regiment got the route at an hour's notice, and was rattled away in waggons, day and night, without a single halt from Essex to Lancashire.

As we entered the scene of disturbance, the cottages for whole leagues of the high road were deserted and locked up. We could at time perceive the hungry inhabitants, on the tops of hills or the verge of plantations, looking fearfully at us, and ready to run into shelter at the near approach of "the paddies." We were the only Irish regiment ordered into the insurgent districts.

The sight of the unemployed and haggard population of the towns was most afflicting; but the fierce drollery of some of our fellows used at times to burst out, in spite of their compassion.

"For pity's sake, master," said a miserable looking man, in a town where we stopped for breakfast, to Barny Grogan, one of the company I belonged to, "don't level low when you fire at us—we are poor starving wretches."

"Indeed then I'll not, honey—not more than an inch

below the waistband," answered Barny, cutting a loaf which he had just purchased.

"God help us!" sobbed the weaver, shedding tears of actual despair.

"Arrah, come here, my poor crathur; is it crying you are? Here, take this loaf of bread. But luck to me if I meant a word of what I said, sorrows the word, and may heaven resave me if I don't miss fire or burn priming, every time I let fly at yiz, right or wrong."

The weaver ran off with the loaf to his famishing children; and Barny was, to my knowledge, *as good* as his word; for he was soon after flogged for persisting in firing over the heads of the assailants, in a desperate attack on a cotton mill.

We were soon encamped in the heart of the insurrection, if the desultory risings around us deserved the title. Small parties were stationed in all the petty towns and villages in the neighbourhood; and I was soon ordered with a detachment, to relieve another of ours, twelve miles off, which had had rather a serious affray, in which the little lieutenant who commanded, was all but thrown over the battlements of the bridge.

It was a fine summer morning when we started at daybreak, and in about five hours we were close to the town to which we were bound. As we approached, I heard the shrieking crash of an ill-trained military band; and presently a regiment of local militia, about twelve hundred strong, came straggling out, in full marching *dis*order, on their way to the exercise-ground, about half a mile from the town. It was the time of annual training, and a season, as may be supposed, of prodigious importance to these shuttle-throwing veterans, from the colonel to the corporal, "pioneers and all."

Being resolved to gratify their pride of military consequence, I formed my little party in line by the road side, drew my sword, ordered "fixed bayonets;" and stood, with "shouldered arms," ready to salute the regiment as it passed. But I little anticipated the embarrassment I was about to cause to the worthy warriors. No sooner were my ambiguous motions observed by the colonel at the head of the column, than he consulted with the lieutenant-colonel beside him, and called up the major and adjutant, who rode in the rear. A halt was commanded; and I saw that a

road-side council of war was holden, as to the measures of etiquette to be pursued in this most difficult predicament.

They seemed at length to decide that I was not drawn up in actual order of battle, and that they were to repay my salute with a return of all possible honours. The word "march," was accordingly given again, and the whole column advanced in slow time, the band crashing forth a grand symphonia, with triangle, cymbals, and great drum, each and all *obligato*. The four mounted officers rode abreast, at the head of the regiment; and on my presenting arms (as in duty bound) on the music passing me, the colonel thought he could not do less; and consequently, at his command, the whole of the marching battalion came to the "*present*;" the officers leading companies, and their subalterns, saluted; and the colours were swept down to the very dust, in honour of myself and my twenty men. Any Johnny Raw, who ever attended half a dozen drills, can tell what a ludicrous display all this must have been. My own men had, I must confess, a very disorganized appearance, for almost every one of them was forced to stuff a glove, a handkerchief, or a *hand* into his mouth to avoid laughing outright—but the whole pageant passed off very well.

As soon as I got my men into their billets, I dressed, roused up my old friend Toby Underwood, who was recruiting in the place; and being resolved on getting a dinner at the local militia mess, I waited on the colonel on his return from the exercise ground, and presented him a report of the strength of my detachment, the meaning of which document puzzled him amazingly. As I expected, he asked me to dinner, and I consented, with rather a patronizing air, on condition that my friend Toby was invited, together with a cornet of heavy dragoons, who was stationed in the place, like myself, with a small detachment. The dinner hour was *noon*, the usual time with all the weavers, warehousemen, and cotton spinners of the country. I had scarcely a moment to see Toby and the cornet, convey the colonel's invitation, and concert a plan of operations for mystifying the *localities*, when the dinner bugles sounded, and we repaired to the inn.

Two rooms had been knocked into one, that is to say, the partition between them was removed, to make accommodation for so large a party. There were upwards of fifty officers of the regiment present, not one being missing, except a couple who were too seriously indisposed to be able, like

their brethren, to strut their this year's fortnight per annum on the stage of military caricature.

The arrangement of the almost interminable table was not a little amusing to us who went to criticize. At the head where we, the strangers, were posted, with the field officers, several bottles of wine, red and white, were placed. "Midway down," like the samphire gatherer, on Dover Cliff, and below the captains who came next to us, decanters of rum and brandy punch marked the station for the subalterns of senior rank; and the lowest compartment of the festive board was garnished with bottles of beer and ale, fit beverage for the ensigns, the quarter-master, and adjutant, who occupied the foot of the table. The colonel sat at the head; Toby Underwood next to him at one side, the dragoon cornet at the other; the lieutenant-colonel was between Toby and me; and on my left was the captain of grenadiers, a gaunt, raw-boned attorney from one of the neighbouring towns. Opposite to me, and next to the cornet, sat the major, a complete specimen of the species "Sturgeon," a corpulent and red-faced old fellow, in a brown bob wig—a wealthy publican of the place, who seemed, like Boniface, to have lived on his own ale. The rest of the captains were shop-keepers or master manufacturers. The colonel was himself a landowner, who, from having originally swept a warehouse, became immensely rich; and gradually advanced from porter to cotton spinner, from cotton spinner to proprietor, and was then on the very point of purchasing a rotten borough, and going into parliament. The lieutenant-colonel was a man of pretty nearly the same original stamp, though he had not the talent to wear it out, in the progress of advancement in the world, like his superior officer. In fact, the latter was, though ignorant, a cleverish fellow in his way—the other, my next neighbour, a mere vulgarian, and one of that decided kind that feels, or affects a pride in his vulgarity. During the dinner he gave me several sketches of the persons at table, of himself among the rest; and vaunting his own and others' wealth, he finished, by telling me,

"Yes, Lieuteant Hardygun—that's your name, isn't it, eh?—Yes, lieutenant, we are all sprung from the dunghill, every one of us; but dammee, d'ye hear, we ha' been wiser than the cock in the old story, for when we found the jewel we knew its value."

The importance attached to the titles of even the lowest grades of these heroes, was droll enough. In military society all officers below the rank of captain are indiscriminately called *mister*. But on this occasion no man's rank was slurred over. It was lieutenant this, ensign that, adjutant such a one, quartermaster so and so, all through the day.

"Pass the punch, Lieutenant Twist," said one; "Clear off your heel taps, Adjutant Wheeler," cried another. "The pleasure of a glass of hale with you, Ensign Spinaway?" asked the quartermaster.

"Twe, if you please, Quartermaster Windwell," answered the ensign.

There was tremendous execution done among the dishes; some of the feasters seemed put to a nonplus, certainly, in the usages of a table handsomely served, and displaying a profusion of plate; the silver forks came very unhandy to sundry of the hard-fisted subalterns, and various mouths ran imminent risk of being enlarged, by the edges of the knife blades which were thrust into them. These, are, however, but invidious observations—let them pass.

There was a profusion of wine, punch, and ale, consumed during dinner, and many of our entertainers were nearly drunk before the cloth was removed. The clamorous conversation, the joking and jibing of the uncultivated youths in the region of malt liquor, was mixed with the more spirited sallies of the punch drinkers; and such a Babel-like confusion arose, that the colonel felt it necessary to put it down by the mere force of lungs. The toasts acccordingly began, and any man who has ever been in the north can well imagine the speechifying which followed.

The King, the Duke of York and the Army, the Duke of Clarence and the Navy, the Church, the State, the Ministers —religious and political, and many other toasts of a general nature were given, with suitable exordiums by "Mister the Colonel-President," the title by which every one at table scrupulously addressed him. But "a health," of a nature more immediate to the company, was now about to be proposed.

"Clear off, gentlemen!" cried the colonel, in a tone of command, "fill a bumper! I give you the health, happiness, and prosperity, gentlemen, of our gallant and distinguished guests, the regular officers of the army and marines, now present; the representatives of three branches of the tree

of our national glory, the warp, the woof, and the weft, of the land service; the horse, foot, and dragoons of the British army." Toby had told the major, that he belonged to the "Horse Marines;" the major passed it to the colonel, and so the thing stood.

It became necessary to make a reply, in acknowledgment of the honour just done us. My neighbour, the grenadier captain, told me, it was expected we should each make a speech, but Toby declined plump, while the cornet merely stood up, and briefly said, "Gentlemen, all your healths!" Seeing the disappointment of our entertainers, who received that short sentence with loudly expectant cries of "Hear! hear!" I stood up, and after a few sentences of thanks, I burst into a warm eulogium of the institution of the local militia; talked of serving one's country, fighting for one's firesides, covering one's self with glory—of patriotism, heroism, laurels, liberty, cannons, musketry, broad-swords, and battering rams, in a most edifying mixture of splendid incomprehensibility. The room echoed with cheers, the table groaned with thumps; glasses were upset, bottles broken, and most honourable testimonies to my eloquence overflowed the table, in rivers of port, sherry, brandy, and strong ale. I proposed the colonel's health. He made an oration, and gave the lieutenant-colonel's. From him the toasts and the speeches went gradually down one side of the table and up at the other. Some vowed that "It was the happiest day of their lives;" others declared, "They wanted words;" others again, that "They were overpowered by the unexpected honour;" one fellow said "His heart was as full as his rummer of punch;" and another still *more original*, began, "Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking—"

But when it came to the major's turn to make his speech, and put an end to the oratorical display, my friend, the grenadier attorney, gave me a nudge with his bony elbow in the ribs, and said—

"Listen now, lieutenant, listen, I say; now you'll hear something good, depend on't, the major's a pithy ould' fellow, and when he speaks 'tis to th' purpose—listen!"

The old major rose from his chair with due solemnity; broad blotches covered his face in variegated shades of purple and crimson. He looked all of a blaze, he took a quid

of tobacco out of his mouth, placed it in his waistcoat pocket, wiped his brow with the table cloth and began—

"Gemmen! I am no great dabster of a speech, d'ye see—I thank ye all for drinking my health—I drink yours—and I'll give you a toast or a sentiment—May no gemmen officer of the Hoxton and Hustleberry united regiment of local militia, ever want a clean shirt or a guinea. Three times three, gemmen!—here's your healths all round the table!"

"I tould you, didn't I?" asked the grenadier captain, with another punch of his elbow in my side; and it would be quite impossible to describe the effect of the major's oratory. It had literally come home to "the business and *bosoms* of men;" and that's the secret—the truest touchstone of eloquence, whenever, and wherever it may be.

The bugles now sounded for evening parade. The colonel left the room, followed by his next in command, the adjutant, and the assistant surgeon. But the major swore that "may he be tapped if he'd stir without another bottle"—the captains all with one voice, chorussed this resolution; and he was lifted by acclamation into the vacant chair. The lieutenants insisted on having more punch; the ensigns called for malt liquor in all its possible varieties—pipes and tobacco were introduced—and I and my delighted companions saw that the full tide of mutiny had reached high water mark. We stirred the cauldron of inflammable matter, swore we never heard of such despotism, as breaking up a dinner party for an evening parade; and Toby Underwood declared it to be contrary to the articles of war. In vain the bugle blew its blasts through the streets: the adjutant was knocked on the head with an empty bread basket, as he came for the tenth time to summon the officers away; and in fact the whole business ended by our remaining at table, drinking, singing, and speechifying, twelve mortal hours, till the clock pealed midnight into the ears of Toby, the cornet, and myself; every other man being either carried off to bed by the waiters, or lying scattered in utter drunkenness in various parts of the mess room.

The next morning a message from the colonel requested our attendance at a little council of war, held between himself, the lieutenant-colonel, and the adjutant. The recent violation of all the rules and regulations of military discipline was the subject in discussion; and strange as it may seem, we were summoned to give our advice as to the most

proper means of punishment for the very offence of which we had been the instigators and abettors.

"What ought I to do with these officers of mine?" asked the colonel.

"Put them under arrest," said the cornet.

"Bring them to a court-martial," cried Toby.

"Smash them all," exclaimed I.

"I'll be d—d if I don't," replied the colonel, slapping his hand on the table; and the adjutant was ordered forthwith to take a wheelbarrow and a pioneer, to go to the respective quarters of the mutineers, gather their swords, and place the disgraced owners in close arrest.

My companions and myself immediately took our departure, to go the rounds of the unsuspecting offenders, and spirit them up to a still more refractory misconduct. As we passed out from the inn door, we saw the barber, who was in the habit of operating upon Toby, coming from the room which was occupied by Major Bungbutt. (I do not really know if this was a true cognomen or a sobriquet.) Toby knew the barber for a wag, and asked him what he had been about?

"Ecod, Master Underwood," replied he, "I ha' been jist a shaving o' th' oul' major—he's all afire—he'd fizz like a hot iron if he was thrown into the river."

"How do you know that?" asked Toby.

"Why, when I took un by th' nose, awhile agone, by gom, I felt my fingers and thumb aw scorching, so I nat'rally popped 'em into th' ott water in jug on th' table; an' ecod, I got both burnt an' sca'ded!"

I scarcely remember what measures were taken, what resignations sent in, what punishments inflicted; but I am sure the united regiment of Hoxton and Hastlebury was as thoroughly demoralized and decomposed in one day of home service, as they could have been by the hardest fought campaign abroad.

CAPTAIN X——.

During my career of service I have met with numbers of brave men, and a few cowards. I have seen courage and fear display themselves in various ways, and many modifications; but I never met with but one instance of a thorough mixture of audacity with poltroonry, of the basest faint-heartedness with presence of mind.

On joining the regiment to which I exchanged, for the sake of serving in Spain, the very first of my brother officers to whom I was presented by the major commanding, was the captain of the company to which I was attached. I never was so prepossessed in favour of any one at first sight. He was a fine handsome young man, of most elegant address, full of ready wit, and apparently burning with military ardour. He was a prodigious favourite in the regiment. Nothing could exceed his attentions to me, except the pains which he took to instil a portion of his own gallant spirit into mine.

The first time I went into action with this new regiment, Captain X—— was unfortunately taken ill, just before our brigade was ordered to advance. He was obliged to let me lead on his company, and his regret made a deep impression on me. It appeared to me that he suffered more mental anguish than bodily, even though, I think, he specified his being desperately ill in three places.

After we had succeeded in driving the enemy from a strong redoubt, the captain joined us, in great spirits and good health, all his spasms having given way to some violent habitual remedy, which he told me was either "kill or cure" with him. He almost wept at finding that the fighting was all over.

We had several smart skirmishes soon after this affair. Captain X—— was often in the field, but I never happen-

ed to see him through the smoke, except on one occasion, when he shewed great tact in the use of a pocket-glass, with which he constantly looked out from behind a tree or a mound of earth, and gave orders with great coolness to me and the other subalterns, to advance and retreat, as occasion required.

In a storming business, when I was detached with a few men,* a serious accident was *near* happening to Captain X——. As soon as the place was taken, and I returned to the regiment, I received a pressing request to repair immediately to him, as he feared he was at his last gasp—dreadfully wounded. I ran to his quarters, in a house just under the rampart, to which he had crawled; and I picked up the surgeon of the regiment on my way, forcing him to abandon some other patients to give his whole attention to my friend. We found him lying on a mattrass, almost insensible.

"Good God!" said I, "what has happened? where are you hit, my dear X——?"

He could not speak, but placed his hand on his side.

"Let me examine you, Captain X——," said the surgeon. "I have not a minute to lose—we have many others wounded, officers and men."

"Ah, my dear doctor, are you there?" said the sufferer, opening his eyes for the first time. "How kind this is—but never mind me—hurry off to my poor fellow-soldiers—it is of little matter what becomes of me—I am too far gone for help—I am a dying man—yet you need not exactly say "*killed*" in your report; I don't wish to shock my friends *too* suddenly. Merely put me down "dangerously *wounded*."

"I can put down nothing, Captain X——, till I see your wound," said the surgeon, drily. "Where are you hit, Sir?"

"Why, as to that, my dear doctor, I really can't exactly specify—that is to say, I cannot say directly, that I am absolutely *hit*—but—but—"

"But what, Sir? I am in a hurry—the life of many a *brave* man is risked by this delay—I cannot be trifled with," exclaimed the surgeon, with most unfeeling emphasis.

* Phil Hartigan here modestly alluded to the occasion of his leading the forlorn hope.

"My dear fellow," resumed X——, "I am the last man in the world—the very last ——"

"What is your wound, Captain X——, if you are wounded at all?" peremptorily asked the surgeon.

"Ah, never mind me, never mind me," replied the captain; "leave me to my fate—but spare my friends—break it gently to them—only say "*severely* wounded," and let me die!"

"What *is* your wound, Sir? Of what nature, I ask you again?"

"It must, I think, have been a cannon shot—I feel my side almost battered in—that is to say, a *spent* shot."

"Is there any mark?"

"Why, no—no—not decidedly a *mark*—I cannot say there is a direct contusion: it might have been, in fact, *the wind* of a twelve pound shot, or something of that kind—you may, in short, put me down (to save the feelings of others, very dear to me) you may put me down "*slightly* wounded."

"Why really, Captain X——"

"Not a word, not a word, my worthy friend—off to your duty—go, go along—you *must* put me down "slightly"—whatever you like, in short—something—anything—only pray let my name be in the list of the wounded! Not another word—good by, good by, my dear, my very dear doctor!"

The doctor smiled, as bitterly as though he had just swallowed a dose of rhubarb. He left the place; and to my infinite surprise, and that of the whole army, I may say, the London Gazette, which some weeks after brought us the official account of the storming, shewed us the unprecedented notification, in the list of casualties, of Captain X—— being "*very* slightly" wounded. He was the only individual of the regiment who was not thoroughly ashamed of this, and who did not feel the actual cautery of the surgeon's printed sarcasm.

I now began to know my man; and was not much surprised, at the night attack on a fortress soon after, to hear myself called loudly from the head of the company, (I occupying my post in the rear; as we advanced in subdivisions to the breach), by Ned Flanagan, of Galway town, Captain X——'s covering serjeant.

"Mr. Hartigan, Mr. Hartigan! For God's sake, your

honour, come up, come up quick, and lade the company,—the captain's run away *already*."

Every one knows what a hot affair Fuente d'Onore was —but no one took it so *coolly* as Captain X——. The village had been taken and retaken several times, till a final charge in which our regiment bore a part, drove the enemy out, and left us in possession of the place. As we forded the river, in close column of companies, Captain X—— quietly slipped behind, and took up a position among the rubbish of an old house, which afforded him a fine view of the business. The colonel by whom we were that day led on, a Scotchman, who was by hereditary right as brave as a lion, turned round suddenly to the adjutant, and asked him,

"Where is Captain X——?"

"Hiding under that wall, Sir," answered the adjutant, pointing to the *reconnoiterer*.

"By G—, that's too bad!" exclaimed the indignant colonel. "Gallop up to him—*at* him—*over* him—and if he does not rejoin the regiment instantly, cut him down on the spot! Now, my brave lads, on them, steadily and coolly—give them the steel, the steel, my boys, and plenty of it!" added the colonel, turning to the regiment, and quite forgetting Captain X——. But the adjutant rode fiercely up to him, and hurriedly repeated the orders he had received.

"Nay, nay, my good friend," said X——, "what's the use of being so confoundedly hasty? Just let me say a few words in explanation. May I die, my dear friend, if—"

"Die and be d—d!" abruptly uttered the adjutant, putting spurs to his horse, and dashing back to his post, where he had scarcely arrived, when a musket shot through both his cheeks tumbled him to the ground, and put an end to his gallant conduct for that day.

As soon as we were thoroughly in for it at Salamanca, when the grape shot began to pepper the head of the column, and the men dropped right and left, an officer of ours was seen to throw himself bodily into a dry ditch; and those who could not distinguish who it was, thought we had another brave fellow knocked over. But those who identified Captain X——, were quite satisfied that *he* was in safe quarters. As soon as the business of that hard fought day was well and thoroughly done, we had ceased firing, and were charging after the broken enemy, when an officer was dimly observed through the smoke that was clearing off,

about fifty yards in front of our line, waving his hat with its long streaming feather, in one hand, and flourishing his sword in the other, cheering on the regiment, with shouts of most vociferous valour, the Arapilles echoing to his cry. A roar of laughter burst along the line, and became particularly loud when our company joined in it, for we soon recognized our resuscitated captain, and knew better than any others how to appreciate his prowess.

But his best, and, poor fellow, it was his *last* exploit, occurred not long after this, at the siege of a place memorable for the determination of its defence, as well as the vigour with which it was attacked and carried.

The approaches of the English army were pushed on with a frightful proximity to the place; so much so, that the guns from the bastions, were fired point blank at individual officers and men, who had the temerity to raise their heads above the trenches; and they were often hit from cannon of large calibre, with as dead a certainty, as though the most unerring sharpshooters had levelled at them with rifles.

Our entire company was ordered down from the camp, on a working party, one fine morning, out of our turn of duty, and not a little to our surprise, to replace another which had taken its place in the trenches during the night, but was almost annihilated soon after day-break, by the terrible cannonade from the enemy's works. One of our subs was killed the day before, so that Captain X—— had but myself and the ensign, a gigantic Kerryman of about twenty years old, and six feet five inches high, under his command. We were under cover, as soon as we came within range of the enemy's guns; and so hot was the fire, that not one of us felt disposed to despise the captain's example of keeping as close as possible.

There were several small redoubts thrown up along the trenches, from which elevations, the officers on duty could keep a sharp eye on the men at work. I stept or rather crept into one of these, to relieve the last surviving officer of the company we replaced. He was in the act of eating a crust of bread, which his servant had procured him for breakfast; and as he was leaving his post to my occupation, he incautiously raised his head, to look at the hostile ramparts, when it was carried clean away by a twenty-four pound shot, and the body knocked several yards out of the redoubt.

These were not pleasant occurrences for any man's com-

fort, but least of all so to one of Captain X——'s temperament. I was scarcely settled in the redoubt, when I saw him moving towards me along the trench, stooping much lower than the utmost prudence required; and he soon came crawling into the redoubt, requesting me to change places with him, and take the command of the whole party, as he wished much to sketch the bastions of the fortress: and he took out his sketch-book and pencil for the purpose. I could not refuse his request, a most unlucky one for him, for had he stayed where his duty required, he had most probably escaped the catastrophe which ensued.

I had not changed places with my captain five minutes, and had just stepped up on the ridge of the trench where the soldiers worked, to look about, as it was my duty from time to time to do, when the general of the day galloped up, attended by two aids-de-camp, and a couple of orderly dragoons. He was one of the bravest of the brave; too brave, indeed, as was proved by his death not long after, on a distant service unworthy of his fine talents. He, too, was an Irishman, and knew our regiment well.

"Who commands this party, Mr. Hartigan?" asked he.

"I do, Sir," answered I.

"There is a whole company here, isn't there? Who is the captain? Where is he?" were the rapid questions next put.

"There is an entire company—Captain X—— is the captain—he is sitting in that redoubt, Sir," were my immediate answers.

"Sitting in that redoubt! May he be doubly d——d! What is he doing there? Hark ye, Sir," added he, addressing our finger-post of an ensign, "you have long legs; step out then quickly—go to that redoubt, and bring back Captain X—— here instantly. Stoop, Sir—stoop low—lower, I tell you, or you'll not have a head left on your shoulders."

The intrepid Kerryman strode along, but cared nothing for the general's caution, and scorned the shelter of gabions or fascines. When he came to the redoubt, he summoned out the captain, repeating *verbatim* the general's speech.

"What a cursed hot-headed fellow!" exclaimed X——. "Go back to him, my trusty ensign, and tell him I am taking a sketch of the first importance; I am proving the engineers to have been all wrong. Tell him the service will absolutely suffer if he disturbs me."

The ensign strode back again, and delivered this message

to the general, who was moving about busily, giving various orders around him.

"Taking a sketch! The engineers all wrong! What an impudent scamp! D'ye hear me, Sir—go back—tell your captain, once again, that I order him to come here; and if he refuses, drag him neck and heels out of the redoubt, and up to this spot."

"I'll tell you what, my friend," said X——, in reply to this second summons, and hoping that while he temporized, the general would take himself off—or, possibly, that he might be *taken* off—"I'll tell you what—"

"Don't give yourself the trouble to tell me any thing, Captain X——, but come out of this immediately, I tell *you* again," said the ensign. At this instant his cap, which was visible above the wall, was knocked off his head, perforated by a cannon ball.

"God bless me, what a narrow escape! how very lucky that you were not three inches *taller!*" exclaimed the captain.

"Never mind whether I'm tall or little, Captain X——," said the Kerryman, coolly clapping the shattered cap on his head again. "I'll tell you what, the short and the long of it is—by Jasus, if you don't come with me, quietly and by fair manes, I'll drag you out of it, dead or alive—so come along, I advise you."

X—— finding all resistance or subterfuge to be vain, stood slowly up and followed the Kerryman along the trench; muttering that "a man's life was not safe a minute on service with these infernal mad-brained Irishmen; but that with persons of common discretion, one might go through a dozen campaigns, as securely as though one had never smelt powder."

The enemy seeing a general officer so close, sent their missiles towards us in double quantities. One of the orderlies was literally cut across with a shot, and an aid-de-camp's horse severely struck with the splinter of a shell. Captain X—— saw all this as he came forward; and by way of ending the business, and stopping the general's mouth, he held forth the little sketch book, and began some stammering sentence.

"Not a word, not a word, but listen to me, Sir!" said the general. "Resume your place here—do your duty—or, by Heavens, I'll make you such an example as never—"

Here the general was himself stopped short, by the explosion of another shell, directly over the heads of the group —and the report was instantly followed by a terrified mixture of groan and shriek from poor X——, who clasped both his hands across his breast, and with a dreadful expression of agony in his face, fell flat on his back, almost under the feet of the general's horse.

"Good God, is it possible!" cried the kind-hearted general, his wrath at once appeased. "Who could have thought of his ever dying so fine a death! Well, he's gone, poor devil! He was at any rate a clever, a pleasant fellow, and a gentleman—ay, every inch, but his *heart*—but, damn him, he could not help that! Here, soldiers, throw one of those great coats over the body of your captain, and bear him to the camp. We could, after all, 'have better spared a better man.'"

With this quotation, the general coolly trotted off with his aid-de-camp and orderly, in the midst of a shower of shot and shell. The ensign and myself were too much shocked by what had passed, to think of any thing for a minute or two, but the fate of our captain, and we stood gazing after the body, as it was borne away, the limbs already stiffening before it was out of sight.

What was the astonishment of the general, who thus pronounced Captain X——'s funeral oration, on riding back to the camp about an hour afterwards, to see the identical Captain X—— unharmed, unblushing, and unabashed, dressed, as was his wont, better than any man in the army; and cantering his little Arabian pony along the lines with a feather streaming from his hat nearly as long as the pony's tail? And what was my surprise when I met him the next morning!

But this could not last. A significant hint was that day conveyed to him from the highest authority. The following morning brought him (he said) letters, requiring his instant return to England. He set out at once. The next Gazette announced his resignation; and as Captain X—— has been ever since an ex-captain, I have nothing more to say of him.

THE

MONKS OF RONCESVALLES.

THE battle of Vittoria was a glorious affair. We had been nevertheless roughly handled, and a week's repose would have been worth half the riches of the east. But that could not be. We trod in the footsteps of a flying enemy, and we had but three days halt in six weeks. We broke up from Placentia on the 16th of May, and marched into Roncesvalles the 1st of July.

The Spanish scenery of the Pyrenean range turned us all into lovers of the picturesque; and we looked at the mountains with feelings that we could lie down at their feet, and sleep there for ever. Harassed and jaded men and cattle alike, we entered the old town in that state of good spirits and good temper which anticipated comfort is sure to produce.

On the following day we learned with great joy that we were to remain in the place taking our turn of duty on the summits of the hills which surrounded us. The French army had stopped to take breath on the mountains farther on; and the advanced post of their position was visible on an overhanging rock of prodigious size, called Château Pignon.

Soldiers know better than any other class of men how to make themselves comfortable. In a couple of days the whole division felt quite at home. It was my good luck to be quartered in the monastery, the brotherhood of which treated us very well. The whole place belonged to these monks, who were considered a most pious and exemplary set of men. The shrine of our Dame of Roncesvalles is

in great vogue for many a league round, and pilgrims flock from all parts to offer up their prayers and watch for miracles. Some of our lads who were deep in literature, used to amuse themselves quoting Ariosto and Bishop Turpin, and we all began to get familiar with the names of Charlemagne and his Paladins. We used to gaze at the Brêche de Roland, which gaped widely on the summit of the distant mountains, seeming to offer a passage into heaven that shone through it.

The monks shewed us, in the sacristy, Bishop Turpin's slipper, and Roland's mace, and many other curiosities, quite as authentic. That was all very well for the antiquaries; but some of us, I among the rest, found shooting the wild goats, and frightening the eagles, the most romantic pursuits of the place. On the 4th we received ten days pay. We had a capital dinner—the first really good one since Placentia. We enjoyed it amply, and got to our beds as straight as we could.

Being completely rested by the end of a week, we found the place beginning to grow devilish dull. A change was loudly called for, no matter of what kind. Some of the lads wished for more fighting, others for more money; all for some fun. We found it hard to amuse ourselves. Some read, some puffed on the flute or scraped the fiddle, others sketched views of the glorious scenery. I took great delight in climbing the mountains, by the rudest and most unfrequented ways, and rolling down from the summits huge stones, which broke into a thousand fragments on their descent, and dispersed in a shower of dust, before they reached the bottom of the ravines. Thus we contrived to kill time.

Nothing could be more singular than the aspect of the country seen from those high stations, in all the animation of military possession. The valleys shewed all the bustle of bivouacs, and irregular encampment. The mountains were studded with tents, wherever a tent could be pitched for small parties of out-posts and piquets. Above these again, and more advanced from the lines of the respective armies, videttes were to be seen pacing the rocky solitudes, and keeping a sharp look-out. Trumpets and bugles were constantly echoing around, and at times an occasional discharge of musquetry or field-pieces varied the desultory

sounds. But it was all the while dead peace; and, odd as it may seem, we all began to long for war again.

Not being able to fight the enemy, nothing was left but to quarrel among ourselves. This was not frequent with brother officers, certainly, but we had several affairs with our Spanish allies. The little commissary of the brigade I belonged to, was insulted by a Don Lorenzo, or Francisco, or Diabolo, something or other. The commissary was irate to the last degree, and looked as big as one of his bullocks; but he could not get any one to be his second on the spot. Few of us liked to be identified so closely with these purveyors. As I, however, saw that the little fellow was in earnest, I thought it hard that he should be forced to submit to an affront, for want of some one to load his pistols; so I stepped forward, and offered to carry his message. I had not far to carry it, for the Spaniard was standing close by, as proud as a don could be, in the notion that he had bullied an Englishman. But when I talked of an immediate meeting, and pistols, I saw that he was a true bobadil. He swore by the life of his saint," (and in fear for his own) that he would fight in no other way, than with a sword in one hand and a dagger in the other—the only manner worthy a descendant of "*los antiguos cavalieros.*" Seeing that my hidalgo was not a fellow of real Castilian kidney, I took the liberty of giving him an unceremonious kick—the readers of Hudibras may imagine where; and with a "*Va usted con Dios!*" I turned on my heel, and never heard more of the don. Not so of the commissary. That very day he sent me a kid, two bottles of real cogniac, and a skin of excellent wine—a delicious windfall to our little mess.

A day or two afterwards, some suspicious circumstances induced me to turn my more particular attention to the *padres*; and I took it into my head that their sanctity was not so unquestionable as it was thought to be. My room was in a recess, formed by a wing branching off from the main body of the building, and a wide corridor separated it from the dormitory of the monks, and this again was partitioned and subdivided into several little pigeon-hole rooms, where a great deal of billing-and-cooing might be quietly carried on. I had observed, on more than one occasion, a nice little girl, called Maraquitta, the reputed niece of the *secretario*, coming from her uncle's room, but with a face so steal-

thy, and a look so confused, as no innocent visit need have caused.

This was evidence enough for an idle or prejudiced judge, and I was both. I immediately passed a sentence of condemnation on the *secretario*, resolved to lie on the watch to entrap his reverence, and forthwith gave secret instructions to my Portuguese lad, Antonio, to keep a careful eye on what was going on in the *secretario's* quarters, and more particularly on what might go *in*.

Antonio was an apt scholar. I had educated him myself. He used to tend my goats in the Peninsula; but having bravely borne a few beatings, in the execution of some secret services, I promoted him to the attendance on my person. His mattrass was placed near my room, in the corridor before mentioned, in a most favourable position for the purposes I intended; and every thing promised a discovery, if there were any thing to be discovered. But the wary *secretario* had nearly frustrated all our projects, by complaining to the quarter-master-general, that my servant, sleeping in the corridor, disturbed the devotion of the holy fraternity. Antonio was, in consequence, sent to the right about, but his acuteness was put doubly on the alert.

On the very next night I had a jovial party, of five or six, in my own room. The last of the commissary's last bottle of brandy was disappearing fast. We were all ready for a frolic, and full of mischief. Most *apropos* to a state of such excitement, the door slowly opened, about midnight, and Antonio came stealing in on tiptoe; and with a radiant glow on his countenance, he whispered me that he had just seen Maraquitta slipping into the *secretario's* cell, and heard the door bolted on the inside.

"Soho!" cried I, raising my hand; and Antonio, like a staunch and well-trained pointer, made a full stop. "Now for it, lads," continued I, "all's safe and right—we've got the old fox into cover—and now, here goes to make him break in prime style!"

Without another word of preparation, I rose from the old-fashioned, damask-covered, hair-stuffed arm-chair, which I occupied as president for the night. I immediately ripped it open, back, bottom, and sides; while Antonio, with infinite alertness, almost anticipating my orders, emptied the contents of my large powder-flask into a basin, with the remains of the brandy. I tore the horse-hair into shreds, and

mixed it well with the damp powder; while one of the party (a violin player) added a lump of rosin, and another brought from his room, next door to mine, a piece of stone sulphur. In a few minutes all the materials were pulverized, melted, and amalgamated, and we had manufactured a dozen of fire-balls, sufficient to destroy a fleet.

All being ready, I slipped off my shoes, stole across the corridor, and heaped the balls against the door of the *secretario's* cell. I then returned for a moment to my room, when a bumper being quaffed to the success of the burning, we all moved gently out, and I thrust a lighted candle right into the combustible mass.

In a moment the whole corridor was in flames. The gunpowder fizzed, the horse-hair crackled, the brimstone rosin blazed; and the conflagration was so sudden and so serious as to surprise and alarm us all We had no notion of our own cleverness at such diabolical combinations.

Antonio instantly roared out lustily in Spanish, "Fire, fire, in the priory!" We all chorused his cry; and the first result was the instant opening of the *secretario's* door, from which Maraquitta rapidly emerged, in that sole and simple garment, called on Tam O'Shanter's Nannie, a "cutty sark." The red-headed *secretario* followed, in a corresponding costume, and burst with a lurid plunge through the flame and smoke before him. While I seized the terrified fair one in my arms, one of my trusty accomplices gave an ear-splitting view halloo to the flying *secretario;* and sung out in the words (well known to most Irishmen) of the celebrated blind piper, Kerns Fitzpatrick,

"Hoicks! Wind him, and find him, and drive him! Push the red rascal through the blackberries! Hoicks! on him, on him! tear him and eat him!"

The hunted, belaboured, and bewildered *secretario* ran forward and backward, doubled and redoubled, through smoke and flame; and at last attempting to seize the screaming Maraquitta, he received a *facer* from an experienced fist, which laid him sprawling. Lamps, candles, torches, lights of all kinds, now added to the illumination. The *padres* came running and waddling, in every direction, rubbing their eyes, calling out "Fire, Fire!" and bellowing lustily for the patron saint of the convent—but he never came. The monks were hustled, tripped up, and rolled over and over, without mercy or ceremony; and a Babel-like mixture of

French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Basque, screams, groans, prayers, curses, and confusion, completed the scene. All the pumps, pipes, and reservoirs, were put in requisition, and the whole population of the place plied their resources so well, that the danger of being burt was succeeded by the chance of being drowned. Thinking the joke had gone quite far enough, I released Maraquitta from my grasp, and, with my fellow incendiaries, took advantage of the confusion to steal unobserved to my room.

The next morning the monastic horizon looked gloomy enough. Maraquitta was sent off at day-break to Tudela, her native town. The monks drew up a formal complaint against me, and the prior declared he would forward it to the duke. I lost no time in running to a Spanish regimental chaplain, an honest and liberal divine, and I implored his advice. He immediately prepared a counter statement, detailing such of the events of the previous night, as told for me and against the monks; the truth, a good deal of the truth, and even a little more than the truth. I addressed this remonstrance to the Bishop of Pampeluna, got it signed by all my brother delinquents, and with it in my hand boldly entered the prior's apartments. On reading it the alarmed superior turned as many colours as a dying dolphin; entreated me to drop the affair, as he did—on finding it too hot to hold; abused the *secretario*, and vowed he would send him to the Indies, that asylum for all the scum of Spanish monkery. To set the seal on our compact, he invited me to dinner; and before I had quitted him ten minutes, he sent me a twenty bottle case of prime old Malaga.

The next news I heard was that the *secretario* was banished from the monastery; and Antonio (who watched him to the last), reported that he had seen him stealing out of the direct road to his retreat, and slily taking to that which led to *Tudela*.

I had a capital repast with the prior; but left him rather early to rejoin my messmates, who were celebrating our treaty of peace in my chamber. As I crossed the corridor, I encountered the *secretario's* most close ally, the *baxonisto*, or bassoon and serpent-playing brother of the monkish band. He gave me a gloomy scowl, shook his iron fist at me, and murmured hollowly that I had not long to live. I told him of my reconciliation with the prior. This intelligence, with a cordial invitation to make one of our party, produced a

powerful revolution in his sentiments. He accompanied me to my room, got as drunk as a piper, and, sending Antonio for his bassoon, he played to our dancing, till the matin bell called him to his post in the choir.

AN AFFAIR OF OUTPOSTS.

Being a good Frenchman, the general selected me a few mornings after the row with the *Secretario*, to proceed with a flag of truce to the enemy's lines, on a mission of rather an interesting nature.

During the retreat from Vittoria, the French army had lost not only the whole of their artillery, but almost all their baggage. Every extraneous article was abandoned; and the hot pursuit of our advanced guard forced several fair fugitives to quit their carriages, and escape on foot. One lady, the wife of an officer of rank, was so terrified at the sight of our hussars, who came suddenly close upon her and her escort in a narrow defile, that she sprang from her caleche, and with her *femme de chambre* and postilion, plunged into a cork wood that lined the pass, while the half dozen dragoons made the best of their way *en avant*. Every possible entreaty was shouted after the lady and her attendants, in English, Spanish, and French, by the officers of the party, to resume their places and continue their route unmolested. But no answer was returned from the terrified fugitives; and there being no spare time for ceremony or delay, the carriage was instantly rifled; and among the booty was discovered a child, a beautiful little girl, of four or five years old.

This was a very puzzling sort of prize to the captors. The dragoon who first laid hands on little Zoé, which was the child's name, carried her, with as much tenderness as rough arms and a rough nature allowed, and gave her up to the serjeant, who passed her on to the cornet, by whom she was handed to the lieutenant, who made her over to the captain, who delivered her to the major, who presented her to the

colonel, who felt it his duty to lay her before the general, with a regular report of the transaction from beginning to end. Thus did little Zoé run rapidly up, from the lowest to the highest rank to which her promotion could reach; for the brigade being detached from the division it belonged to, the responsibility finally lay at the brigadier's door, and he was not long in taking it across the threshold. He willingly took charge of the little prisoner; and placed her under the especial care of his servant's wife, an excellent woman, and old campaigner, who knew well how to secure whatever comforts could be had for the child, on the small scale proportioned to her infant wants, in the rapidly succeeding movements of the brigade.

During the few weeks which elapsed between the route of the enemy, and our arrival at Roncesvalles, little Zoé had become immoderately attached to her protectress, and picking up many phrases of English, she grew extremely amusing, and was a constant fund of entertainment to the general, his staff, and all the officers who could condescend to be interested in the vivacious prattle of childhood. I confess myself to have been one of those, and that was perhaps a chief reason for my being subsequently selected as a flag of truce, in the service of little Zoé.

As soon as some repose was allowed to the general, he began to make every inquiry that could lead to the discovery of the child's parents. An immediate and animated correspondence took place between him and the French commander in closest contact with our position; and a few days sufficed to ascertain that the child's mother had by good luck succeeded in rejoining her husband's division, and that she was at the moment safely with him at St. Jean-Pied-de-port, where he had a command. They had, on their part, suffered the cruelest anxiety for the uncertain fate of little Zoé. The mother reproached herself incessantly with her abandonment of her infant, and the husband did not spare himself, for the imprudence which induced him to risk the safety of both wife and child in the dangers and horrors of war. Inquiries of all kinds had been set on foot. Letters had been interchanged between the opposing generals, rewards offered, descriptions distributed, and all parties who had been informed of the event at the British headquarters, vied in exertions for recovering the lost treasure. But we, who had it in possession, were all this time the

most remote from the scene of these exertions, unacquainted with the general interest excited by the affair, and as it happened, the nearest to the parties most interested in it. When the delighted mother knew that our little heroine was actually at Roncesvalles, she repaired with all speed to the advanced quarters of the French army; and as soon as our general heard she was expected, I was dispatched to the outpost of Château Pignon, to see if the lady had actually arrived, or to ascertain if the child was to be sent in immediately to the care of the French commander.

I accordingly mounted my pony and set out, accompanied by a trumpeter and a dragoon bearing a white flag; but all this melodious and pacific display did not secure me from a danger which might have cut short my mission, my adventure, and my life. I had not gone five hundred yards beyond our outmost piquet, when a band of most picturesque marauders, armed Basque peasants started up from among the rocks, and began popping down at me and my men from their well directed rifles. We shook our flag of truce and flourished our trumpet most peaceably, but they gave us no respite till we gallopped clear out of the range of their fire; and two or three bullets came whizzing after us, even close to the side of the advanced vidette of the French army.

I was received at the first post by a corporal and his guard, who apologized for the uncivilized salutation of the peasants, with amazing politeness, but not enough to have extracted a bullet from me or my trumpeter, had we happened to have *caught* one, as the French say. My eyes were immediately bandaged, and I was led cautiously up a rocky and difficult path, leaving strict directions to my mouth-piece, the trumpeter, not to get garrulous or groggy —in short, to neither speak or drink.

When my eyes were uncovered, I found myself in a large, wainscotted, ill-furnished room in the old château, surrounded by French officers, with a fashionably dressed lady, and her *femme de chambre*, sitting at the table beside which I stood. A few words sufficed to explain the purport of my appearance; and about as many minutes proved enough to obtain me the gratitude and confidence of the enthusiastic Frenchwomen. When, to her rapid inquiries, I answered that her child was safe and well, and ready to be conveyed to her, her delight seemed to have no bounds; and

certainly she set none to its expression. She rose from her chair, clasped my hand in both of hers, and did all but fling her arms round my neck. The witnesses of the scene, all of them soldiers of several campaigns, felt the contagion of the mother's tenderness; and shewed all the good feeling that is sure to appear in Frenchmen whenever a child is the subject of interest.

The mother, in her anxiety to learn every particular of the capture and subsequent treatment of little Zoé, overstepped, in a measure, the bounds of strict propriety, by inviting me to accompany her instantly to the shepherd's hut, where she was lodged, and where we might converse amply and uninterruptedly. I, of course, gladly accepted the proposal, offered my arm in return, made my bow to the officers, and walked off with my new friend, followed at some paces distance by her maid Graciosa, who, by-the-by, was rather too much of a coquette for a Basque peasant girl.

My companion was a handsome brunette, not exactly of *la première jeunesse*, but of that degree of *embonpoint*, which wears gracefully in a woman of thirty, or thereabouts. It may be supposed that I viewed her with an eye of enterprise. The freedom of her manners, the warmth of her disposition, the peculiarity of her situation, seemed to mark her as a fair object for conquest.

Our conversation at first ran on Vittoria, the battle, and the retreat; next upon Zoé, in talking of whom she never tired; and with her phrases of maternal endearment, were mingled the deepest self-reproaches, against the unnatural cowardice which had suffered her to abandon an object so beloved. While she declaimed and I listened, the maid had disappeared, the hut was solitary, and I was just endeavouring to bring about a more personal turn to her discourse, when Graciosa entered, more apropos to my appetite than my intentions. She bore an overflowing supply of cold meat, poultry, cakes, fruit, and wine; and to every article of this sumptuous collation (which had travelled so far for my indulgence) I did ample though summary justice.

The lady talked as fluently as I eat fast; and warming into confidence, she almost made me the depository of a secret. Her husband, she said was, "an excellent creature, a good soldier, *une bonne pâte d'homme, d'un certain âge; brave comme son épée; mais bête! mais bête, à manger du foin.*"

A little further advance in our intimacy opened her heart still wider, but not *entirely*.

"*Ah, mon Dieu! est-il donc possible que j'aurais jamais pour ami un Anglais! un ennemi juré de ma patrie! Mais non, c'est impossible! Vous êtes Français—avouez-le—oui, vous êtes Français—mon cœur m'en fait l'assurance.*"

Being prodigiously cosmopolitan on the occasion, I swore that I was of any country she pleased; and her next communication was very nearly *a confession.*

Méchants que vous êtes, vous autres Anglais! You killed me *un bien tendre ami* at Albuera, my husband's aid-de-camp, *mon cher Adolphe!* When a woman is not quite happy in marriage, not perfectly matched, she requires a friend in whose bosom she may *épancher ses peines.* My sweet Zoé is his very portrait—*jugez donc s'il était beau!*"

All this made me the more assiduous and condoling. I offered to wipe off her tears, which flowed freely, and I told her I should be delighted if she would *épancher* her *peines* with me. She became somewhat tranquillized; again changed the subject to little Zoé; and suddenly putting on her huge black bonnet, which was half smothered in white plumes, she took my arm and we quitted the cottage for my return to the outpost, followed by Graciosa, and escorted by a corporal and a file of men. On our arrival at the piquet, I found my trumpeter dead drunk; and while the French soldiers strove to rouse him and fasten him on his horse, Coralie (for such was her name,) walked forwards with me, close to our outlying post, where we parted, and I pursued my way to Roncesvalles, lighted by a brilliant moon.

The next morning early I mounted my pony again; and, attended by a serjeant of dragoons, I proceeded to restore little Zoé to her mother. The woman who for so many weeks had had charge of the child, was almost inconsolable at thus losing her. She had quite endeared herself to this kind-hearted woman; and when the latter lifted her up on the saddle before me, she wept and sobbed aloud. Zoé seeing her to be unhappy, cried bitterly, and the parting was really affecting. But the meeting between mother and child was still more so. I cantered rapidly on from our own outpost to that of the enemy; but I could scarcely make use of that word on the present occasion, and I was met at the most extreme point of the French lines by Coralie and her maid. She had been watching there since day-break; and

when she saw me approach, she flew towards me, and I had scarcely time to alight from my horse, when she was by my side, and embracing the child with impassioned rapture.

The mutual recognition was a spectacle worth looking on. The unbounded delight of the mother and the infantine joy of Zoé, are not to be described. They seemed to forget every thing but each other; while I, and the serjeant, and the French vidette stood, all alike, gazing on and enjoying the scene. But Coralie, Graciosa, and myself, soon repaired to the cottage, where a capital Pyrenean breakfast was spread out. I ate heartily; while Coralie feasted on the growing beauty of her daughter, and seemed disposed to devour her with caresses.

I confess that, in my observation of this maternal enjoyment, which so raised the mother in my esteem, I felt some annoyance at the check which it gave to my own individual views. But I let nothing of this escape me, and strove to enter into the scene with feelings as little adulterated as possible. I abstained from uttering a word or venturing a look that might clash with Coralie's actual sentiments; and hour after hour passed innocently away. At length I began to abandon all hope of making a further progress in the affair; and was thinking of at once making my bow, and taking final leave, with a good grace, of this now truly interesting woman, when, to my infinite surprise and pleasure, she said to me, in a whisper, that Graciosa could not overhear,

"I am all this while forgetting—no, not forgetting, but neglecting you; and I feel my ingratitude in doing so, even for a moment. I am wild with joy, in having my dear child once more with me; but my heart is not dead to other feelings. I may confess that you have inspired me with great interest, with warm regard. I can say no more at present; but if you will meet me here to-night, after my maid and the peasant family have retired to bed, I shall hope to prove my gratitude—my friendship—I can say no more!"

Seeing that I was about to reply, in a strain of great animation, she added,

"Not a word, not a word! I must not be suspected of more than a common gratitude towards you, even by my maid. Let us now part; take your leave in as careless and common-place a way as you can."

I obeyed her instructions, bade her adieu, embraced the child, wished all happiness to both, and saluted the three or

four officers who had come down from the château, with as much *nonchalance* as if I had not a thought of seeing any of the party again.

During my way back to Roncesvalles, and for the remainder of the day, I thought of nothing but my adventure, which promised so happy a termination. I was in that pleasant state of satisfaction with myself and all around me, so natural to a man after such success. My vanity was gratified by the facility of the conquest, and my love of adventure excited by its novelty. The danger to be encountered did not enter into my thoughts; they all turned on Coralie: so handsome, so interesting, so enthusiastic, and so fond of me.

I ate but little dinner, drank but little wine, and refused two or three invitations to spend the evening. As soon as day closed in I retired to my quarters, and putting on a dark grey frock, and broad leafed Spanish hat, which had served me before on some masquerading frolics, I put my loaded pistols in my pockets, took a stout stick in my hand, and set off on my adventure.

My ready boy, Antonio, contrived to unlock, unperceived, a small door in the monastery garden, by which I went out into the open fields; and making a circuit round the town, I succeeded in gaining the mountain immediately above. The moon was high and bright in the heavens, but the night was cloudy, and I thus had the alternate advantage of light and shade, lying close when the moon was uncovered, and making great way while she was overcast. By these means, and knowing all the passes, from my rambling excursions in the hills, I contrived to pass unperceived by either our own or the French piquets, and arrived without hindrance at the door of Coralie's little dwelling.

I walked cautiously and closely round and round to be convinced that all was quiet; I then peeped in at the window of Coralie's little room, which was, I knew, separated by a slight partition from the closet occupied by Graciosa. I saw Coralie sitting by the bed-side, looking tenderly on Zoé, who slept in her mother's bed. I thought the child more beautiful than ever, but also that she was not in her proper place. The mother appeared in my eyes still more lovely. I grew impatient and tapped gently at the casement. I expected that it would have been instantly opened; but instead of that I perceived Coralie put on her bon-

net and large shawl, and in a moment she came out by the door, instead of letting me in at the window. I flew towards her, and attempted to embrace her, for I was amazingly loving on the occasion.

"Hush!" whispered she, "follow me."

I did so in a pleasant kind of tremor, that arose from any thing but fear. She entered a copse of young cork trees close to the hut; and as soon as she was out of hearing of those within, she spoke to me pretty nearly as follows, gently but firmly repressing the advances which I made towards a closer alliance.

"I see you mistake me and my motives—but I am neither surprised nor angry. How otherwise could you think of me and them, than as you do? I am not, however, so light, so profligate, I may say. I esteem and regard you as the restorer of my child, the object most dear to me on earth; but that is all, my friend, for I wish to feel towards you as such. I confess myself to be a mere woman, not an angel, as you, deceivers as you are, would persuade us; but I am not to be just asked for and won. Love is the growth of *impulse*, or of *time*. If it does not spring up in a day, a month is not enough to produce it. Now I did not fall in love with you yesterday; therefore there is no chance of it, as to-night we part, in all likelihood, for ever. I set off at day-break for St. Jean Pied de Port. We may never see each other again. But to lessen the chances against what I should deeply regret—for I shall be happy, most happy to meet you again, and know you intimately and long—I have begged you to meet me here. Could you believe that for any thing less than some very solemn reason, I would have made you run the risk of passing the lines of two armies, and of being caught as a spy in ours? Hear what I have to say, and know me better than you do now.

"When I saw you this morning I was but partially informed of what I am now sure of. God knows if I am not a traitor to my country in telling you what I know; but the law of nature is stronger than that of nations. The protectors of my child shall not perish if I can save them!

"Clausel's artillery has arrived at the army; reinforcement on reinforcement is pouring in; all is preparing for a decisive, a terrible blow. Soult has sworn to exterminate you all; and in five days *vous serez écrasés!* To-day is the 20th of July; the 25th will be St. James's day, the day of

doom to the English army! I have thus fulfilled my duty—*one* at least; and in performing that, I have perhaps sacrificed another. But it is not my fault; gratitude has been stronger than patriotism—*vous m'avez dénationalisée.*"

A few words of farewell, warm, cordial, and not to be mistaken *for more*, closed our interview. What I said is unimportant. In fact, I could not utter much, for I was lost in astonishment at the new aspect in which this versatile woman appeared. Her tone and conduct during our first interview had led me to form that false estimate of her character, which too often results from the levity of manners that distinguishes her countrywomen. Her look and bearing on the present occasion, corresponded with the importance and solemnity of her warning. She seemed raised above all frivolous or merely personal feelings. I never had a more exalted sense of the capability of the female *mind*—of the depth of the female heart.

I retraced my way towards Roncesvalles; and trod with a much less lively step than that with which I had come over the same ground an hour before. The heavy sense of danger seemed to weigh on me. Had it been for myself alone I might not have felt it so much; but when I thought that a whole army might be compromised, that thousands of my fellow soldiers were in peril, and that their safety might depend on me, my sensations were in the highest degree awful.

I forgot for a while my own actual situation, until I was aroused from my reverie, by the report of a musquet, *followed* by a rather tardy *Qui vive?* and the well known sound of a bullet whistling, as it went past me, "for want of thought."

I turned round, and saw the French vidette reloading his piece. But I was resolved not to be his target a second time, so I took to my heels, with cautious speed, and regained the monastery unharmed and undiscovered.

SHARP FIGHTING—SPOILED FEASTING—BLUNDERING AND BURYING—PRIESTS AND PILGRIMS.

The information gained during my "affair of outposts," was too serious to be kept to myself a moment beyond that in which I could communicate it to the highest authority in the place. Next morning I accordingly reported my having obtained such information, without betraying the source from which it came. Both I and my intelligence were made light of. I was not exactly called an ass, but I am not quite sure that I was not thought so. I nevertheless remained deeply impressed with the conviction that the English army would be attacked on St. James's day.

The very morning after I had made my report, a singular coincidence of information occurred. General Murillo, who commanded a brigade of Spaniards, received a warning, perhaps not quite so direct as mine, but strongly corroborative of it. His soldiers, having no regular commissariat, were in the habit of marauding, even into the French side of the mountains, and sweeping the valleys beyond for a supply of corn and cattle. A party of these foragers had, a short time previous, seized and driven to their own cantonments, a considerable flock of sheep. The owner, a French Basque, came in and addressed a petition to the Spanish general, promising that if his sheep were restored to him, he would send regular information of every movement of the enemy. He obtained his flock undiminished, and he was faithful to his engagement. On the 22d of July, two days after my adventure, he sent in one of his shepherds, with a significant recommendation to the general, to beware of St. James's day. This notice was communicated at head quarters, and, like my own, disregarded.

In the mean time, grand preparations were made by the

Spanish brigade for the celebration of this important holiday in the Catholic kalendar. A dinner for fifty officers was ordered at the inn. I, among many other British, was invited; and I was appointed to act as one of the stewards on the occasion by General Murillo, although he, as well as myself, had a strong presentiment that the feast would terminate in a fight. On the 24th, I made another effort, through my commanding officer, to recommend a more than ordinary precaution—but in vain. At least the only results were an order to our brigade to take its position at the chapel above the town, and to fire three alarm guns, if any movement was observed along the enemy's lines. Murillo requested permission to advance into the pass between the town and the French army, and he was sent forward accordingly.

The next day, the 25th, St. James's day, Coralie's prophecy and the warning of the shepherd were terribly *fulfilled*. A fierce and irresistible attack was made upon Murillo and his insufficient force. He would have been annihilated in the pass had not our brigade rushed forward to his aid. A scene of desperate but unequal conflict took place. We were, after some hard fighting, turned right and left, and forced to retreat. We were only saved from being surrounded and utterly destroyed, by a heavy fog setting in; but the battle was still at intervals maintained, through all the vagueness and solemnity of the mist. We left behind us on the field half a regiment and six guns.

I was sent forward, (or *backward*, if you like better), to Roncesvalles, with a verbal despatch. As I galloped up towards a part of the —th regiment, which was reluctantly retrograding, but in fine order, poor O'B—— had his thigh carried away by a cannon shot. I stopped, dismounted, and put him across my horse; sprang up again behind him, and moved on towards the town.

O'B—— was a thorough, rough-spun Irishman, whose blunders were notorious to the whole army. The last and greatest he ever made was while he lay bleeding to death across my horse.

"Cheer up, my boy," said I, "your life may be saved yet."

"Oh, the devil a fear of that," replied he; "the leg may go, but the life is safe; for I insured it, sure enough, the

last time I was in England, and paid doubly dangerous for it, my boy."

I had known poor O'B—— several years. I once went out shooting with him in Essex, when we were quartered together in Colchester barracks. He had just arrived from Ireland, where farming was then carried on, on a narrow scale. Even a large field of turnips was a rare sight in the arable district where he came from; but an extensive crop of red cabbage had never met his eye until the day in question, and he could not associate such a vegetable with any thing but a pickle jar. He was crossing from a grass field into one the produce of which I could not exactly discover, when he stopped suddenly, and with a leg on either side the stile, and turning to me, with the greatest wonderment depicted on his visage, he called out,

"Oh, blood and turf, Phil, did you ever see such a field of pickled cabbage!"

One day, defiling near Braganza, we passed an old and extensive mansion. "Aha!" said O'B——, "I suppose that's the house of Braganza the Portuguese make so much bother about."

On crossing the Tormes, he rode a tall horse, and put his baggage upon a pony. The consequence was, he got over dry but his kit was dripping wet. Recollecting this when we were talking of crossing the Pyrenees, he exclaimed, (thinking we meant another river),

"Then, by the powers, I'll put my baggage on the big horse this time, and ride the pony myself!"

Poor O'B—— had breathed his last before I reached Roncesvalles. The roar of cannon, the rattling of musketry, the enemy's trumpets sounding the advance, and our own bugles sounding the retreat, made altogether a din, through which I could barely hear his dying request that I would bury him in consecrated ground, as he was a Catholic. I fulfilled this injunction faithfully but hurriedly. I applied to my friend the prior, to have a grave dug in all haste in the cemetery. Two of the brethren completed a hole deep enough for my purpose, in a few hurried minutes; and the body was committed to the earth, dressed as it was, no time being allowed even to take off the gold watch and chain, and the other trinkets which the poor fellow had on his person.

This sad business over, I bade a hearty good-by to the prior,

and went out into the street. The troops were in full retreat through the town, and the approaching cannonade told me I had no time to lose. I stepped for an instant into the inn, to fill my flask with brandy, and I saw, with an envious eye, the whole display of roast and boiled, and stewed and baked provisions, almost ready for the feast.

"My worthy hostess," said I, to the landlady, "I am really sorry for your loss—not a morsel of all these good things will be eaten—we are retreating as fast as possible—'tis a race for life or death."

"It's all one to me, Señor," answered she; "Frenchmen have as good appetites as English—they will eat it, never fear—roast beef and all."

"Damn me if they do, you cold-blooded, ungrateful old fagot!" exclaimed I, in a passion; and beckoning to my little friend the commissary, who was over head and ears employed with horses, baggage-waggons, and bullocks, I obtained of him one of the carts, with full permission to use it as I pleased. I accordingly fell to work, assisted by some straggling soldiers, and maugre the lamentations, reproaches, and imprecations of the landlady, I heaved into the cart, ready roasted ribs of beef, legs of mutton, and turkeys, with fowls, hams, pasties—every thing solid, in short, leaving the soups, the fricasees, whipped cream, and *vol-au-vent*, for the hungry *Gavachos*.*

We retreated, fighting step by step. The 26th we were hard pushed at Zubiri; the 27th attacked at Urgate; the 28th at Villa-Alba; in all which affairs the French were repulsed on all points, in the latter with heavy loss. The 29th was a day of truce, to collect the wounded and bury the dead. In the intervals of this dreary duty, our people and the French regaled themselves together, with a repast of raw beans, gathered with great cordiality in the same field. Every thing being prepared, several brigades of guns mounted on the most difficult heights, and a noble attitude assumed, the morning of the 30th was ushered in by a general attack on the enemy's position. They were routed in every direction, and driven, in broken bodies, over the same ground across which we had retreated a few days before. We pressed them hard on the 31st through the beautiful

* Nick name for the French in Spain.

vale of Bastan,* and took a large convoy of brandy at Elizonde. The 1st of August we halted at Maya; *bivouacked* on the 5th at Los Aldoides, amidst torrents of rain, with no tents, but plenty of melted snow; and on the 6th we re-entered Roncesvalles once more, where I was re-instated in my old quarters in the monastery, which a wounded French chef d'escadron had occupied *ad interim*.

Almost the very first face I recognized was that of the re-instated *secretario*, and the next was that of the *baxonisto*. I learned from the latter that few of the monks had quitted the place in consequence of the French possession; and moreover that the enemy had conducted themselves remarkably well.

Being anxious to afford to the remains of my poor friend O'B—— a burial of more solemnity than the last, and also recollecting that his friends might be glad of the trinkets he had on him, as memorials of the wearer, I applied to the prior to have the body exhumed. The prior crossed himself, and answered by a plump refusal, it being, he said, contrary to the ordinances of the church to violate consecrated ground by such a proceeding. I however found a brother monk or two less scrupulous, and I had the grave opened, when I was somewhat shocked to find the mutilated remains of poor O'B—— *stark naked*.

Boiling with indignation, I hastily repaired to the prior, and detailed the fact. He shrugged up his shoulders, and exclaimed, "*Los Franceses, los Franceses!*" laying the blame on the backs of the French, they being conveniently turned. But a neighbouring carpenter assured my boy Antonio, that he had seen the *secretario* and two or three of the brotherhood, rifling the grave and stripping the corpse, the very day I had laid it there. I felt the impossibility of obtaining redress, so I determined to watch an opportunity for revenge.

The next day I was on duty with my company on the hill. While I lounged about, musing on past events and present probabilities, I heard a sudden burst of psalm-singing of most rough discordance. Looking from a pointed rock, under which I had been walking, I perceived a posse of pilgrims of both sexes, trooping across the hills from the French side, a most vagabond collection as ever prostrated

* This valley is a perfect contrast to the desolate one of the same name on the French side of the mountains.

themselves before a shrine. The field officer on duty came up to me, and ordered me to drive back these fellows without the least ceremony. I accordingly approached them, and addressed myself to their leader, an able-bodied ruffian, with a long beard, broad leafed hat, and coarse cloak, almost covered with cockle shells.

"Where are you going?" asked I.

"To Roncesvalles' shrine," replied he.

"What for?" said I.

"To pray our souls out of purgatory," answered he.

"You may go farther and fare worse," retorted I, "but not this way. You shall not pass here depend on it; so to the right about face—quick march!" and back they went, crossing themselves, (and cursing me, no doubt,) and howling most piteously, in full chorus. I never had a more thorough contempt for the humbug and hypocrisy of mock devotion.

Three mornings after this I was awoke about day-break, by a confused murmur of psalm-singing in the court-yard of the monastery. I jumped out of bed, ran to the window, and to my great surprise, saw the whole division of pilgrims, filing in through the porch, and marching towards the chapel. I learned from Antonio that, after the repulse they met with from me, they had made a wide circuit through the mountains, and entered Spain again by the pass of Orbaicety, where the guard of Spaniards allowed them free ingress, on a principle of religious toleration I suppose.

I perceived that, after about an hour of praying and singing in the chapel, the whole body were stowed away in a large room near the organ-loft; and there it was that I was resolved to play them a trick—I had not quite decided of what kind.

By the time they had, after their day's devotion, supped, and settled themselves (as they thought) to their night's repose, I approached their position, and carefully reconnoitered it. I found the door of their apartment to be old and ruinous, hanging loosely on its hinges, the pannels broken, and presenting a couple of wide and most convenient chinks, through which I intended to carry on my offensive operations. I had fixed my eye, during the day, on two hand-pumps, used by the monks for watering their peach trees, which abounded in the monastery garden. These were soon procured, and brought to me by my trusty Antonio;

and I as quickly placed them each in a bucket of putrid water, which he carefully selected from the greenest of the two stagnant ponds that adorned the garden.

I then collected about half a dozen of my companions (a couple of whom had been of the merry-making which we gave to the *secretario*) ; and all being ready for the assault, the pumps were placed at the breaches. I peeped in, and saw the pilgrims lying higgledy-piggledy together, old and young, men and women, lighted by a single lamp, which burned dimly before an image of the virgin, in a niche not far from the door.

I saw my worthy acquaintance, the leader with the bushy beard, stretched full length, and I thought that the sound of his particular snore was not like the mellow utterance of natural sleep. In a minute or two this suspicion was fully borne out, for the fellow, feeling assured that he was unobserved, rose gently up, and stole across several prostrate carcasses, which separated him from a young pilgrim, not of the doubtful gender, who lay in an expectant attitude, in the very niche where the statue stood and the lamp burned. The leader sat himself down beside her—but my ardour for action would not brook further delay. So I took steady aim, and let fly a pumpful from one of my buckets, directly in the fellow's beard. Antonio immediately re-loaded ; and I, without an instant's pause, sent another discharge smack against the lamp, which sputtered and expired—in any odour but that of sanctity.

" The rain is coming in !"

" Shut the windows !"

" Re-light the lamp !"

" Rouse up the brethren !" cried some.

" The rain !" roared another ; " St. Jago protect me, my eye is nearly knocked out."

Two more well-sent discharges completed the general confusion, and soaked the victims through and through. The whole body rose *en masse*, and with loud vociferations they rushed towards the door, pushing against each other, and tumbling about in every direction.

We now heard the whole fraternity of the monastery rushing up stairs in loud alarm. We therefore decamped, Antonio leading the way, with the empty buckets and one of the pumps : I covering the retreat, with the other, ready loaded, in both hands. Just as we gained the private door,

at the head of a flight of little steps which led down to my room, I saw the red head of the odious *secretario*, blazing obnoxiously in the glare of a torch which he carried above it, as he mounted the grand staircase, cheering on his brethren to the rescue.

Never did I feel my resolution more determined, or my hand steadier. Every nerve was wound up for justice. What chance, then, had my victim of mercy or escape? I planted one end of my pump on the floor, pointed the other where I wished its contents to go—and in an instant the *secretario* was struck, almost dumb and blind, with a volley of water, mud, and duck's-meat; and the very memory of his former scorching quenched in the dirty deluge.

THE CARNIVAL.

We have been told from high authority that there is a step between the sublime and the ridiculous. It is, however, a mistake—there is no such thing. Sublime and ridiculous are one and the same—co-existent qualities, of different complexions, perhaps, as looked at in different lights, but blending and blooming together, like the green and pink shades in a shot poplin. I was quite convinced of this, a day or two ago, by witnessing the carnival, to see which I came on purpose to Paris. My long wanderings in the provinces had left my wardrobe not quite suited to the display I expected to witness on this occasion; so my first business, after I had shaken off the dust of the Diligence, was to look out for a tailor, knowing the importance of appearances, as well as old Quarles himself, who tells us in his "Enchiridion," that "the body is the shell of the soul; apparell is the huske of that shell; the huske often tells you what the kernel is." Acting on this principle I was resolved to decorate myself in French costume. Decked out, then, at a day's notice, in a Polish frock, black velvet vest, with a white, a pink, and a blue one, respectively of silk, inside, Hussar pantaloons, boots *à la Vellington*, and brazen

spurs—French every bit of me, brass from head to foot, as a body might say—I sallied forth to present my recommendatory credentials to the friend of a friend of mine, M. Le Vicomte de Vaurien, who had been represented to me as one of a family wonderfully well known in France, a man of fashion, literature, science, taste, and talent; a sort of second Crichton, in short, who had spent many years in England during the emigration, and was attached *à la folie* to all that was British, and to the ancient *régime* at home.

"A pleasant sort of person this," thought I, as I approached his residence, "to lead a young fellow like me through the labyrinth of learning and pleasure; for I intended to be at all in the ring, as we say familiarly at the club. Arrived at the street to which my friend the proprietor's hand-writing on the back of the letter pointed like a finger-post, I was not very favourably struck by its appearance. It was in the heart of the town, narrow, dark and dirty; but, knowing the ways of Paris, I did not much mind all that. "No. 18, *le voilà !*" said I, entering the *port-cochère*, of a gloomy but good-looking house. Then pulling up my shirt-collar and adjusting my hair, I marched up to the landing-place of the *premier étage*, cast an inquisitive glance at the coat of arms on the pannels of a huge old family coach standing in the *remise*, and was in the act of seizing the bell-cord, when a withered old hag shot forth her visage from a dismal little den in the *entresol* below, screaming—

"*Diable donc ! où allez-vous ?*"

"*Qui, moi ?*" I replied, rather indignantly; "*Je vais chez M. le Vicomte, Madame !*"

"*Monsieur le Vicomte ! Qui est cela ?*"

An odd question that, thought I. I cannot surely be wrong. "*Le Vicomte de Vaurien, Madame !*"

"*Vicomte ! Bah ! et c'est là que vous le cherchez ! montez au sixième.*"

"*Au sixième !*" sighed I, looking up the dismal staircase, so high, that it seemed, like Jacob's ladder, to lead to a glimpse of Heaven, which twinkled through a sky-light at top. I drew a long breath of preparation for the ascent, and heard the old wench mutter below:

"*Diable l'emporte ! c'est toujours comme cela vous passez partout à gauche et à droite, sans rien demanderà la portière, vous autres Anglais.*"

"*Vous autres Anglais!*" echoed I. "Rat it, that's too bad, though—she has found me out, in spite of my frock, waistcoats and pantaloons. But never mind! *Au sixième! Courage!*"

Landed at length at the summit, breathless and panting, my head dizzied by a glance over the banisters into the interminable chasm below me, I leaned for a moment against the wall, and pulled a greasy bit of faded pink ribbon that hung dangling beside a filthy little door.

"*Qui est là!*" demanded a feeble voice.

"*Moi*," replied I.

"Aha! an Englishman; wait, wait for one leeteel bit, Saer," answered the voice, in a tone of gaiety.

I waited as desired, confounded beyond measure to find that the very pronunciation of one syllable had betrayed me a second time. While I pondered on this the door opened, and a black silk night-cap popped itself out. A sallow wizened face was under it, and the head it covered was borne upon a narrow pair of shoulders, clothed in a short brown woollen jacket, appended to pantaloons of the same, forming stockings as well, and ending at the feet in a shabby pair of morocco leather slippers.

"Walk in, Saer; walk in, Saer," said the wearer of this strange costume, and still stranger phiz.

He would have measured about five feet and an inch or so, and looked a good half-century old. His upper lip was horribly embrowned with snuff, and he seemed to have but two or three straggling teeth in his head.

"Is your master at home?" asked I.

"My Got, Saer! vat you take me for? I am my master."

"I beg your pardon, Sir," cried I; "I wish to see the Vicomte de Vaurien."

"Why dat is me, my dear Saer. Walk in, Saer."

As he did not seem to wince at my mistake, my "withers were unwrung;" but any one may imagine my mortification while I contemplated the figure and abode of my anticipated Cicerone. I shall not touch my readers' sensibility on my account, by detailing the appearance of Vaurien's garret. A truckle-bed, two tottering chairs, a broken deal-table, a tarnished mahogany basin-stand, with gilded porcelain basin and water-jug cracked and chipped, and standing for show, like Goldsmith's celebrated row of broken tea-cups. These and such like commodities, are not matters to enter into a

description meant for the brightest eyes of England. I therefore draw the blanket (there being neither veil nor curtain at hand) over the mysteries of the Vicomte's abode.

A few minutes made us quite known to each other. He read my letter with attention, shook my hand with warmth, professed himself my most faithful friend and devoted servant, and finished many pleasant sayings by begging me, with an air of great *nonchalance*, to sit down while he took his breakfast. That was soon despatched, for it consisted only of a little cup of coffee without cream, which had stood simmering in a pipkin by the fire, and a small roll, of about the length and consistency of a dried herring, which lay on a shelf with the viscount's dressing-apparatus. His repast required none of the usual appurtenances of a breakfast-table, and being quietly finished, he begged me to excuse his then making his toilette. Delighted at an opportunity of being initiated into the manœuvres of a *petit maître de Paris*, I willingly accorded his pardon. He began by throwing off his black cap, and displayed a head completely covered with *papillotes*, which he, without shame or ceremony, pulled coolly from their respective curls, and folded up in readiness for the service of the night. At first sight of him I thought he had been bald, for not a straggling hair wandered on his temples Now he had a profusion of dark brown ringlets; and had I not seen the progress of de-*cap*-itation I would have sworn he had put on a wig, so that he was just as far from natural appearance one way as the other.

"Pardon, for two little moments," cried he, squeezing my hand in both of his, as he popped into a closet close by the head of his bed.

In two minutes he was back, but no more like what he was before he entered, than I like Hercules. His transformation was magical—it was "Hyperion to a satyr." A rosy flush spread over his face, and seemed faintly fading on the tips of his nose and chin, like setting sunbeams on the peaks of a mountain. A pair of false whiskers of the same pattern as his side-locks, curled upon his cheeks; and his mouth displayed a regular row of well-set teeth; while his head, in its whole *ensemble*, might be really supposed to have just glided gently off the shoulders of a goodlooking fellow of thirty or thereabouts.

I started back. He laughed. "Ha, ha! *vous ne me connaissez pas*," said he, slapping me on the shoulder;

"my dear Saer, you must not wonder at all dis. Ve Frenchmen are enough philosophers to care ver little for appearances in de house, and to know dat 'tis ever ting in de street."

I was so amazed at the metamorphosis, and so pleased with the aphorism, which put me so much in mind of myself and old Quarles, that I did not closely observe the process of his dressing, which I should otherwise have faithfully reported. I followed him with my eyes as he went on, but saw him indistinctly, and heard him chatter without minding what he said. When I recovered from my reverie, I observed him full-dressed all but his coat, wiping the cracked gilt basin with a towel, and placing it carefully in its proper stand.

"*Allons!*" cried he, as he finally settled his collar before the looking-glass, and stood revealed in all the perfumed bloom of a dashing dandy. "Now, Saer, shall we go out see de masks on de Boulevards?"

"Masks!" exclaimed I; "why, it isn't carnival time, is it?"

"To be sure 'tis," replied he; "dis is *Mardi gras*, de gayest of de gay days. Nothing but pleasure, and fun, and hosh-posh."

I may be allowed to mention here, that the vicomte is very proud of his English, and loses no occasion for displaying his familiarity with the niceties of the language, among which "hosh-posh" is a particular favourite.

I was electrified at hearing that the carnival was really going on, for the whole appearance of Paris was really going on, for the whole appearance of Paris was so *sombre*, so muddy, and misty, that I could not imagine any approximation to gaiety in the place or the people.

"*Ah, vous verrez, vous verrez bientôt,*" said the vicomte, as we descended the stone staircase, picking our steps in its perpetual twilight, and directing our course by the iron banisters.

Once fairly on the Boulevard, my friend seemed quite in his element; and though I looked down on him from an elevation of half a dozen inches, and thought my dress exhibited a tolerable specimen of style, I confess there was something in his swaggering air, fine complexion, floating curls, and the red ribbon at his button-hole, that seemed to throw me into the shade. He talked English loudly all the time,

proud of displaying his accomplishment to the ears of his countrymen; and his observations were amusing enough. The day was gloomy, cold, and comfortless—yet the world was out. During the hour and half which I had spent in the vicomte's garret, all Paris seemed to have been suddenly infected with the wish for a walk, ride, or drive. The pathway was thronged with pedestrians; many a mounted exquisite was cantering on the centre of the pavement, between the rows of carriages going in opposite directions, in horizontal analogy to the movements of two buckets in a well. These carriages, of all sorts and descriptions, open and close, cut a poor figure to a man accustomed to the equipages of *the Park*. There was scarcely one from Long Acre to be seen. They were almost all French, gaudy, shabby, and flimsy. It appeared that though all Paris was there, yet the confounded weather kept all the decent horses at home, for such a sorry collection of jaded hacks was never before exhibited in a christian country. The masks were few and vile. Now and then a barouche hove in sight, crammed with clumsy harlequins, miserable mountebanks without a joke, or two or three stupid caricatures of old women, in "feathery furs and studded stomachers, tippets, cardinals, hoods, and ruffles." A pretended peasant, here and there, rode silently along; but there was nothing like frolic, or humour, or happiness. The vicomte pointed out to me some well-known characters in the carriages which passed; among others, in his sky-blue chariot, his brother vicomte, the romance writer, who has described in the heroine of his last work, a better masquerade figure than the whole carnival could produce. "Chargée de plumes, de fourrures, de fleurs, de pierreries, et de gaze, enveloppée d'un mantel à triple collet, et sa robe bordée d'images." I, in my turn, told my companion the names of a few of my countrymen; but I saw none who combined notoriety with the ludicrous, except the celebrated Squire Hold'em-tight, who, mounted on the dicky of a calêche, covered with a huge box-coat, whipped along a pair of pitiful hacks, and (puffing his red and bloated cheeks against the wind) gave occasion to a group near me to halloo out, "*Voilà! Voilà le bœuf gras!*"—and I certainly never saw a finer specimen of John Bullism.

While the file of carriages was thus dragging, like a wounded snake, or an alexandrine, "its slow length along,"

and every face seemed the index of a melancholy or a dissatisfied mind, the sound of martial music struck upon my ear, and presently several regiments of infantry in full order of march, moved along the Boulevards from the direction of the Tuileries, where they had been just passed in review, preparatory to their departure for the invasion of Spain. A train of artillery followed—the heavy rolling of the guns over the pavement mixing with the clash of the military bands, bringing to the mind a rush of awful combinations touching the tremendous probabilities in which these troops were going to be actors. There they were, mingled with the fantastic fooleries of the crowd—the motley crew of masks and mockeries, heavy hearts and dreary apprehensions. I gazed at the scene with a sarcastic smile and an involuntary shudder; and exclaimed, as we turned down the Rue de la Paix (Napoleon's triumphal pillar staring me in the face), "No, no, there is no step between the sublime and the ridiculous!"

LONGCHAMPS.

PLEASURE is certainly the polar star of a Frenchman. He is the needle which points to it most faithfully—but one that has no variations. North, south, east or west, (for though his magnet shifts, it always preserves its attraction,) is quite the same to him. Other men make pleasure a recreation or an enjoyment. It is a Frenchman's business and happiness. His national exaggeration cannot, in this instance, go too far, nor far enough. Words have no power to express the sensation excited in the breast of a Parisian, by the announcement of a fête, a procession, the spectacle, the Carnival, or *Longchamps*. He looks at the almanack, watches the weather, counts the days, and pants through the moments in indescribable agonies of enjoyment. It is astonishing with what acuteness he catches up every flying report, and ascertains every fact, connected with the *summum bonum* of the month or the minute, as the case may be. Ex-

hibitions, which take many weeks and amazing wisdom for their arrangement, are often suspended or stopped by a sudden caprice, of which the public gets a few hour's notice. English travellers, or even those who may be residents in Paris, often cut a foolish figure, hoaxed and mystified by the undesigning frivolity of ministers, mistresses, managers, or censors. An announced airing of the king, or the playing of the water-works at Versailles or St. Cloud, or the representation of a tragedy at the Français, or a ballet at the Opera, is frequently put off at the very time that the English part of the population are swallowing their early dinner, in danger of choking from fear of being late, stepping into their carriages, or half way gone to the place of exhibition. I have known several of my haughty countrymen, who would not confess to being hoaxed even by the whole cabinet council, assert that they saw the king driving out, and comment upon his looks, on a day that I knew him to be suffering in his bed from an indigestion; and a particularly sensitive baronet once gave me a detailed critique on a tragedy, for which I had seen him take places for himself and family, but which was changed for one of Molière's comedies, by a sudden freak of the censorship, an hour before the rising of the curtain. In this case my friend might, to be sure, have been honestly deceived; for I sat in the pit, and saw him sound asleep, from the first music to the end of the fifth act.

The weather, also, frequently takes in the English. I have seen them of an evening a little misty or threatening, but a fine Vauxhall atmosphere, crowding up to Tivoli or Beaujon, though the *fête extraordinaire*, fire-works, rope-dancing, balloon, elephant, etc. had been all decidedly adjourned, and placarded all over Paris a full hour before. The fact is, as I said before, or meant to say, we do not make so much of these things. We hear of an intended entertainment, and we resolve to go to it. We think no more of it till the time comes. We employ the interval in other rational ways—reading, writing, drinking, or what not. Not so the Frenchman. He has his mind's eye always on the one object. He is abstracted from every thing else, but all alive to that. He keeps on the fidget eternally; and looks for every shifting of the minister's will as closely as he watches every change of the wind—for in proportion to a Frenchman's delight at a show is his dread of a shower. Punch

and Judy are not more necessary to his happiness, than an umbrella to his security. Amusement rules supreme as "the god of his idolatry;" but rain divides with ridicule the empire over his apprehensions—I ask a thousand pardons, his *sensibilité*. All this being matter-of-fact, it was quite a matter-of-course that my friend Monsieur le Vicomte Vaurien should present himself, according to appointment, at my lodgings the morning of Longchamps; and, the morning being threatening, it was just as natural that he should appear with a brown silk parapluie under his arm.

"My Got, how unfortunate!" exclaimed he as he came in, "de vind is veering vesterly."

"Yes, a little unlucky, no doubt," said I; "but not enough to be vexed at, Monsieur le Vicomte—it may clear up yet." He shook his head despondingly. "I am quite ready," continued I: "is your carriage at the door?"

"Vat door? Got bless my soul, 'tis at de *Magasin de Voitures à louer*."

"And how the deuce are we to get to it this raw morning?"

"*Diable!* ve must valk"—and we did walk accordingly. I may here mention, that this appeared as odd as it was uncomfortable. The spirit of our contract was, that I should go with the vicomte in his carriage: and I therefore (being at the time a downright invalid) thought it a curious circumstance that, instead of driving up to my door, he told me coolly I should walk to the carriage, instead of the carriage rolling towards me. But I thought of Mahomet and the mountain, and we set out.

A dreadful half-hour's promenade through the wretchedest part of Paris, brought us at length to a sort of bazaar for carriages; and such a collection as presented itself—

> "Barouche and buggy, tandem, random,
> Jarvey, gig and whiskey"—

would have made the fortune of a showman in England. We entered the yard, the vicomte first, in due order of precedence and propriety. I recollected the good old family-coach that first caught my attention at Vaurien's lodgings, and I pleased myself into the notion of my approaching drive in that rumbling representation of worn-out nobility, heraldic distinctions, and privileges gone by. No abso-

lute suzerain of the good old times, demanding *le droit de cuissage*, could have stepped out more boldly to put his spurred and booted leg into the bed of his new-married vassal, than did I prepare the strut which was to lead to my entrance into the family-coach of the Vauriens; but I looked round in vain for this anticipated depository of my pride. I observed, indeed, ready for immediate use, a miserable calèche, fastened with the degenerate remains of a truly aristocratical set of harness to a pair of animals that seemed modelled from the Rosinante of Don Quixote; while a scowling and surly-looking driver, miserably dressed, stood beside, and threw a look at us as if he did not like his company. All this was rather strange; nor did the aspect of things look much brighter from my observing my friend the vicomte in ardent conversation with a broad-set boisterous woman, who was evidently mistress of the place. He seemed eloquent, and she decided; and in fact, to let my readers into the secret at once, she was insisting on the vicomte's offering some security for the hire of the calèche, which was to serve as our conveyance to the delights of Longchamps. A word or two explained this to me clearly; and with the vivacity which men sometimes muster up, when they start from a fit of castle (or carriage) building, I jumped into the vehicle, calling out lustily,

"*Allons, Monsieur le Vicomte! Allons, cocher! Partons, partons!*"

"*C'est assez,*" cried the woman; "*si Monsieur l' Anglais l'a choisi, c'est bien lui qui est responsable. Montez, François; montez, M. Vaurien! C'est une affaire finie.*"

The coachman and the vicomte got up at the word, and away we drove; my friend endeavouring to smother his mortification, and I doing my best to conceal my observation of his embarrassment. He went muttering on, however, every jolt over the pavement giving energetic vibration to such expressions as "Dam beast? Canaille! Hoshposh! Affront a nobleman!" I let him go on uninterrupted, and listened patiently to his cooler confession, that the carriage I had set my heart on not being his, he was obliged to hire one for the day; and having forgotten the little formality of entering into a written engagement, the wretched woman had refused to suffer him to get into the calèche, on his remonstrance at her exorbitant demand; but that my being an Englishman was security, she being protected

without papers in her transactions with a foreigner. This seemed all so plausible that I swallowed it most credulously, and we drove on; but after circumstances made me rather anxious to hear the point mooted by some legitimate propounder of international law.

The rain did not fall, luckily for the vicomte, but most unfortunately for me, for the dust rose in whirlwinds, by which I was nearly blinded, but to which he seemed quite insensible—as if "*jeter la poudre aux yeux*" was an operation as natural for him to suffer under as to perform. While driven along towards the Bois de Boulogne he gradually recovered his composure. The world began to be on the move. A few early equipages came straggling forward; and the sun darted down his glaring rays upon us, enough to raise a smile under any French mustachio, maugre the piercing north-east wind, on which the edge of every sunbeam seemed sharpened, they cut so keenly. We had nearly reached the term of our first *course* (the site of the ancient abbey, from which, and the pious processions of its tenants, the degenerate pilgrimage of our day derives its name), when I was struck by a change of countenance in the vicomte beside me, and by some convulsive twitches and contortions in his limbs, that seemed to announce a severe nervous attack.

"My dear friend, you are unwell, I fear," cried I.

"Oh, no, no—'tis nothing, nothing at all," replied he, with a dignified complacency;—but he kept fumbling at his watch-pocket, as if its neighbourhood was the seat of his malady.

"What is the matter, my dear vicomte?" asked I, impatiently. "Have you lost any thing?"

"Oh, noting, noting at all," returned he gaily; "a mere bagatelle—only my vatch; but 'tis no matter."

"Shall we return and look for it?" said I.

"Got bless my soul, no," replied he, with emphasis, "'tis not vorth the vhile. If 'tis lost, 'tis lost—dere's end of it, you know; and a Frenchman is toomosh philosopher to care for sosh hosh-posh trifle like dat" A laugh closed the sentence, and I pondered silently upon it.

The sharp wind, and the jolting of our "infernal machine," now began to produce their natural effects—for a considerable inclination to eat is the legitimate consequence of air and exercise. The vicomte, too, was in want of some-

thing consolatory, and readily agreed to my proposal that we should stop at one of the tent-like constructions scattered by the road-side, and refresh ourselves with some of the *à la fourchette* temptations of its larder. We were quickly seated, and as quickly served. A capital fricandeau, an unimpeachable omelette, a plate of cold *haricots blancs*, with oil and vinegar, for the vicomte, and a portion of *épinards au naturel* for myself, were the chief ingredients of our repast. For our sour and surly *cocher*, I ordered a bottle of vin de Surenne, celebrated for its acidity, hoping that it would bring him to good humour, on the principle that two negatives make an affirmative. He sipped it growlingly, like a cur picking a bare bone (if I may be allowed the Irishism), and I should have moralized deeply, no doubt, on his invincible savageness, had not my attention been excited by the waiter flinging our bill (for which I had called) upon the table, and by the exhibition of some symptoms in my friend and boon companion, precisely similar to those which had betrayed his anxiety in the carriage.

"What now, vicomte?" asked I, less anxiously than before, "what has got possession of you?"

"By Got, 'tis de very deevil!" was the reply, accompanied by a most abstracted air and rapid gesticulation.

"Indeed!" said I, "we must drive him out then. Fill a bumper, vicomte." As he took no notice of my summons, I did the service for him, and his left hand,

—— "Raised
By quick instinctive motion,"

poured the contents of the glass into their proper recipient but his right kept unceasingly rubbing about the lower extremities of his waistcoat, and had such friction only followed the swallowing of the wine it would have been natural enough, for the *boisson* was most execrable, though announced to us as "*Beaune première qualité.*"

"Speak out, my dear vicomte," said I, once more; "unburthen yourself."

"By Got, I am unburdened already," replied he: "I have lost my purse—my money—*vingt deux Napoléons—trois pièces de cent sous—sept ou huit francs—et quelques petites pièces!*"

The appalling solemnity of this enumeration, and the prodigiousness of the sum, in comparison with the circum-

stances of the loser, filled me with sympathetic alarm. I started up, and swore that I suspected the ill-looking *cocher* of having picked his pocket as he stepped in and out of the carriage. He scouted this idea as impossible. I then turned the battery of my accusations upon a couple of "scurvy mechanics," who were regaling themselves at a table beside us, and proposed calling in the police for a general search. This the vicomte would not listen to for a moment, saying aloud, with great feeling, and his hand placed on his breast,

"*Je connois trop l'honneur Francais; je n'accuse personne; si le sort m'a fait perdre cette somme inconsidérable, c'est perdu : voilà tout!* But, my dear Saer," added he in English, and in a subdued tone, "have de goodness to pay de bill, if you please."

On these words he stalked towards the calèche with a very imposing and rather awful demeanour, leaving me to explain to the waiter and the other listeners the cause of his magnanimous expressions. I paid the bill, and rejoined the representative of the noble race of the Vauriens, with very elevated notions of his philosophy, and profound respect for himself and his whole family to the remotest generation.

We soon re-entered the line of carriages, and proceeded at the regulation snail's-pace adopted on these occasions. My contemplation of the vicomte, who was in a moment as lively, as chatty, and as much at his ease, as if he had found, instead of losing, twenty guineas and a gold watch, prevented me from paying much attention to the unmeaning and uninteresting procession in which I made one, and which annually sets all Paris in a flutter, and may be called *la fête par excellence* of milliners, mantua-makers, and hackney-coachmen. This spectacle of Longchamps is, of all others, the most stupid and the most devoutly worshipped of the periodical frivolities of Paris. No one of any fashion could presume to hold up his or her head for the rest of the year, if they did not, on this all-fool's day, occupy a seat in some kind of vehicle, and sit up for hours to be stared at in the open air, by the walking population of the capital. On the particular occasion which I describe, the crowd of carriages was inconceivable. But the day was not kindly. The sun was hot and the air raw. The year and the season did not pull together. The first was advanced, but the other backward—just like the ludicrous imitation of an English equi-

page which figured before me—a monstrous blue and gilded caricature of the Lord Mayor's coach, dragged by four old white horses, the leaders and wheelers pulling most obstinately in different directions, to the great amusement of the crowd, and the horrible discomfiture of the old aristocratical couple within, their clumsy postillions, with cocked hats and huge jack-boots, and the two footmen, in their scarlet cloaks and yellow plush breeches of the true cut and pattern of the *siècle de Louis XV.* This was the most barefaced revival of the *ancien régime;* but there were many minor attempts, and much laughable absurdity of our own day;—the train of king's pages, for instance, on their piebald horses, and in a most quizzical costume, with various laughter-moving efforts to look English on the part of the other equestrians, both masters and grooms.

The whole thing had the air of a forced production. The white dresses of the ladies were out of all keeping with the coldness of the weather; and a profusion of artificial flowers in their bonnets looked quite preposterous, when compared with the leafless branches of the trees that stretched their skeleton arms across the Boulevards. I was out of patience at the whole display; yet not so much annoyed by the folly of the multitude, as indignant at the meanness with which they submitted to be swore at, and rode over, and shoved, and jostled, and commanded, and abused, by some dozens of mounted gens d'armes—those military masters of the ceremonies, whose wand of office is the bare blade of a sabre, who give curses instead of courtesy, and put fears of despotism and tyranny into the hearts that should be filled with associations of joy. What hope can there be for such a people? thought I. But hold! I am afraid I have got to the length of my tether: and if I give myself more rope I may get hanged, or guillotined, or something of that sort one fine morning.

I sat it out till six o'clock. Less would not satisfy [illegible] vicomte, and the coachman repelled my effort to qui[illegible] calèche. He insisted on my remaining until it was [illegible] vered safe and sound into "the place from whence it came." I was, therefore, obliged to suffer half a day's martyrdom, which may partly account for my disapproval of the show; and having paid the woman forty francs, (being double the common price, on account of the fête), I parted with the vicomte—for ever, I do believe. He gave me a squeeze of

the hand, which was forebodingly forcible, and an assurance that he would come the next morning to settle his share of our day's expenses, a promise which he most faithfully remembered to forget. And it may be well to add, that when I called on him two days afterwards, the old portress told me he had gone into the country for some weeks; and to my inquiry if he had recovered his watch and money, she replied by a turn on her heel, slamming the door in my face, and the emphatical utterance of the interjection "Bah!"

HORSE RACES—FETE OF ROSIERE—SAINT LOUIS'S DAY.

It is in vain to attempt a separate notice of all the Paris sights. They come like blushing honours, "thick upon me;" and drive me out of my pitiful retail business into a line of wholesale combinations. Horse-racing, ballooning, drunkenness, La Rosière, and La St. Louis, make but an odd jumble, I must confess. It is, like that of a modern work, "rank confusion in the orders of precedence"—but no matter; symmetrical arrangement must not be expected from a head which the last month's varieties have set spinning like a merry-go-round. The sun, that so long refused to shine, has at length burst out, and warmed into life all the ephemeral enjoyments of France. Before their flutterings subside into the winter's inanity, I must endeavour to pluck a few of those innumerable feathers which compose their butterfly wings. I have been at about twenty fêtes and fairs within a month; and being completely disburthened of the friendship, and even presence, of my quondam associate De Vaurien, I was driven out upon the stormy solitudes of public places and suburban pleasures. I was for many days tossed about on "the multitudinous sea;" borne along the moving waves of the crowd; carried forward by the gale of the popular breath (not over "spicy," to be sure) like any other privateer or pleasure-barge running ready-rigged before the wind. Continuing this maritime al-

lusion to my pursuits, I must confess in this capacity my manifold offences in my cruise after curiosities. Many a thousand have I crushed of those

"Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flowers,"

as Burns has it—or

——"These floures white and rede,
Such that men callen daisies,"

according to Chaucer—when bringing myself to an anchor, on beds

"Of daisies pied, and violets blue,
And ladysmocks all over white,
And cuckoo buds of yellow hue,"

as Shakspeare says—I have, upon getting under sail again, had the variegated reproaches of many a murdered flower, staring in the face—any one who happened to follow me. It really grieved me to the heart, to witness and partake in these floral depredations; and it is positively one of the chief evils of that propensity for everlasting dance, which entitles this nation to have St. Vitus for its patron, that there is not a spot of meadow or pasture-ground round the capital sacred from the trespasses of "*Le Cavalier Seul*," "*Chassez deux*," "*La chaine Anglaise*," and such like boisterous intruders. The fact is, that no man likes a fête better than I do. Once and away, a rural party of joyous peasants, or a group of gay *grisettes*, tripping it—not on the *green*, alas! but on "the russet lawn or fallow grey," if you will—is as pleasant a sight as one could wish.

I delight in dancing, but then I love moderation, and I hate excess, coupled with which, pleasure is (like the punishment of What's-his-name, the tyrant of old) a living body joined to a dead carcass. Now the French, at this season, at least, think of *nothing* but fêtes, and *do* nothing but dance. All the world goes capering, and there is no fear of treason certainly, for every one seems to have "music in his *sole*." A working-day must be a delightful holiday, I am sure, when they can, without being singular, put their feet at full length upon the ground, for at present, all, young, old, well or ail-

ing, are from Sunday morning to Saturday night "on the light fantastic toe"—except one hideous fat old woman, who nearly crushed the corn of my left foot with the tread-mill pressure of her heavy heel the other day, at the horse-races in the Champ de Mars. And this reminiscence brings me round quite naturally to my subject.

Horse-racing, then, in France, is precisely what opera-dancing is in England, or opera-singing in America. None of them are indigenous to the soil; the natives are not cut out for such exercises of the arm, the leg, or the voice. The performers must all be imported; for the home-breed, in their various ways, are too much or too little refined for the several accomplishments. It ever will be thus in countries so remote in manners and institutions. The social soil can never be ploughed, nor the national feelings harrowed up, so as to bring forth the fruits, which are looked on as the productions of a barbarous or a degenerate clime. Would John Bull give his Newmarket for L'Académie Royale de Musique—for which last word read *danse?* Not he! any more than an independent Yankee would barter his hard-earned liberty, for the emasculated refinement that

> "Squeaks and gibbers in the Roman streets."

For my part, I am always happy to see a people gazing with pleasure, in the heart of their capital, on an exhibition of foreign skill, which they, nevertheless, most heartily despise. It is a proof of independence of feeling; of a notion of self-superiority in matters of importance, without which no people can be great: and, above all things, it satisfies me that, in my time at least, there is no danger of those distinctive features being rubbed off, which keep all countries from becoming (the most abhorrent of improvements to my mind) one great, undistinguishable, monstrous family. I love to hear an Englishman allow the French to be the best dancers, and a Frenchman acknowledge us to be the best boxers in the world. There is something so *naïve* in the fist, and so unso*fist*icated in the latter; and the admission is always made with with so truly national a toss of the head, or shrug of the shoulders, as the case may be! Vestris and Paul, kicking their heels against the fly-scenes of the Opera-house, are objects of high delight and deep contempt to the applauding English audience—while Tom Cribb or

Randall, making their best display in the Champs Elysées, would amuse the Parisians, while they pronounced the pugilists to be barbarians. These national incongruities are all as they should be. What we are proud of, the French despise, and *vice versâ*. We are, like our roast beef, too underdone and too plain for their palates; and they, like their fricassees, too unsubstantial and too *saucy* for ours. It is just as *morally* impossible for John Bull and Monsieur de Grenouilles to have the same notions of politics and pleasures, as it is *phizically* impossible that they could resemble each other in features or complexion. As to horse-racing, in which we excel, it is a matter of course that the French should botch it. To succeed in such a pursuit, men must, of all things, love the country, and have a relish for rural pleasures. Of them the French gentry know little or nothing, beyond transplanting their natural productions to the towns; and probably the greatest burlesque existing is the annual exhibition of horse-racing in the capital of France—from the simple reason, that the actors and the spectators have no sympathy in common. The place, too, appropriated, but not adapted, for the race, is enough to destroy all enjoyment of it; and has been chosen only from a stupid revolutionary imitation of the ancient Romans, who held their Fasta Equiriæ in the Campus Martius. Instead of a smooth and level turf, against which, with us, the noble animals strike their elastic limbs, and bound along in grace and beauty to the goal, here they plough through an immense bed of sand, labouring and panting, and covered with a coat of dust and sweat, jaded and disheartened, and looking any thing, in short, but what one expects in a "high-mettled racer." Such as the thing is, it is almost wholly in the hands of Englishmen. A French jockey rarely appears; and the only gratifying object, to my eyes, in the display, was the knowing air with which the riders mounted their steeds, and gave them their preparatory canter through the ranks of gaping *spooneys* about them. It was amusing, too, (though somewhat humiliating from its anti-English look) to see the winners of the prizes, two thorough-bred horsedealers, with all the blunt and rather slangish air of their profession, lead their respective horses up to the foot of the balcony (from which the Duchess of Berry superintended the scene), preceded by a band of music, and escorted by a troop of horse-grenadiers. I did not much like to see my

two countrymen twirling their hats in one hand, stuffing the other into their breeches-pockets, and looking altogether so confoundedly *gauche* in the presence of "les augustes personnages." I could not help smiling, however, when they took their silver coffee-pot and ewer away in triumph under their arms; and as they gave their several scrapes of the foot, and bobbed their bows up to the balcony, and turned off upon their heels, I thought I distinguished on each of their countenances an expression that seemed to say, "All my eye, Betty Martin!"

Next came Mademoiselle Garnerin and her balloon; and they were much more to the taste of the spectators—she gracefully bowing and looking gaily; *it* moving along, gaudy, inflated, and "full of emptiness." Up she sailed upon her aerial voyage, not to go round the world, but merely (a hard task, alas!) to get above it; and if a man may judge of his fellows by his own feelings or their faces (most uncertain tests, I allow), there was scarce a looker-on who did not, in the enthusiasm of the moment, wish to be yoked in the car with the adventurous nymph, "fat, fair, and forty," as she looked to be.

I had long had a desire to *assist* (as we say in France) at *la fête de la Rosière*. Early associations, boyish imaginings, Madame de Genlis, and other delusions, had fixed this inclination deep in my mind. Pastorality and purity, innocence and ingenuousness, and such animating alliterations, floated before me, and, as might be expected, prepared me for—an utter disappointment. I had gone to the *Champ de Mars*, my brain crammed, like a Yorkshire newspaper, with the anticipated joys of horse-racing, and I came away knocked up like a sorry hack—there are various kinds, reader, as the booksellers could tell you. I went to the fête of the Rosière, my head as full as a flower-pot of bloom and fragrance, and I returned with every expectation as withered as the faded wreath that adorns the image of the Virgin over the porch of Suresne church. There never were such cruel pains taken by a Curé with or without the commands of his superiors, to render common-place and unpopular an institution full of sense and sentiment, as have been taken in the present instance by the Curé of Suresne. The fête of la Rosière, established on the basis of national feeling and true morality, was in its origin meant to reward with a garland (full as honourable *per se* as a blue ribbon) the girl of

the village, who combined the best life with the most graceful demeanour. To-day the whole matter, if I am rightly informed (and I beg that this clause may be a *saving* one), has become an affair of paltry intrigue and party prejudice. The fortunate maiden last year was the daughter of the maire! Now, though I would no more exclude the progeny of a *maire* from the right to the Rosière, any more than the prize of the horse-race, I think the public functionary ought not to have let his daughter enter the lists, lest the people might suppose *his* situation to have some influence in *her* success. They think so at Suresne, I can assure him; but the discontent is at its height this summer, from the Curé having refused the claims of all the girls of the village who could be convicted of having gone to a fête or a dance during the year! Imagine this in France—on the banks of the Seine—within sight of Paris! It is the most preposterous innovation of modern *épurations*, for it strikes at the very root of national manners and character. A French girl entitled to be crowned Rosière in proportion as she is ignorant of "Balancer and Rigadoon!"—why it is worthy of John Knox, who did not deal harder with Mary, his gay-mannered and French-hearted queen, than this Curé with his virgin parishioners. There were, as may be supposed, scarcely any candidates; for the favoured maiden, instead of being "one in a hundred," was, of course, only one out of four or five; and these no doubt the pious *wall-flowers* of former ball-rooms, who, unable to get a flesh and blood partner in a mortal quadrille, have been forced to waltz through the year with the memory of some dead-and-gone saint of the second century. Mademoiselle Julienne, something or other, may, therefore, arrange her garland before the looking-glass, without exciting the least envy in the majority of her fellow-villagers.

As for me, I turned from the contemplation of these puny contentions to the overwhelming enjoyments of "*La Saint-Louis.*" Here, thought I, I shall see something worthy of the genuine fête of religion and royalty combined. Saint Louis and King Louis are to be celebrated together to-day—the throne and the altar—regal splendour with christian piety—all the national virtues consecrating a few of the national vanities—civility and sobriety walking hand-in-hand with gracefulness and gaiety! That was something like a combination for an amateur of fêtes;—so away I trudged in

the hot sun of the 25th of August, glowing with expectation, and determined to be pleased; and a dogged fellow he must have been who was not pleased with the sight of the Champs Elysées at noon of that day. Every thing that could give pleasure (to an unthinking people at least) was gathered together. Merry-andrews, mountebanks, rope-dancers, bands of music, games of all kinds, and every kindly gaiety were collected on the spot. I really wandered through these Elysian fields something in the mood of the happiest of the shades. A thousand vagaries crossed me at every turn; but that, I think, which caused me to moralise the most, was the poor devils climbing up immensely high poles to come at the reward of their aspirings—a silver watch, a pair of buckles, or some such ornament. It was painfully amusing to see these climbers straining upwards; the earliest cleaning off the greasy unction with which each pole was larded half-mast high, then slipping down to earth, and followed by others, all with their pockets filled with sand to fling upon the part of the pole above them, and give them a chance of clinging to it the better in their ascent. I thought of the strange contrast presented by this road to wealth and fame to all the others in life. Instead of being harsh and rugged, the only fault of this was being too smooth; and the only effort of the adventurers was, not to level obstacles, but to roughen their way to fortune. Here, too, were no sharp turns nor short cuts. This was plain, straight-forward, up-pole work; and so far from a *needy* aspirant being, as in common cases, the most looked down upon, the fellow the most *in-kneed*, on the present occasion, had the best chance of getting above the world. Then came the *associations*—those whirlwind disturbers of the nicest train of philosophical speculation. I bethought me of barbers' poles, and the Polish lancers, and the North Pole, and Captain Parry, and so on—until I was roused by the noise of wheels, and the shouts of the human animals that were dragging along the body of a cart, with a huge empty barrel thereon.

The group that presented itself was frightful. It consisted of a couple of dozen ragged, villain-visaged fellows, with about as many atrocious specimens of female degradation, coming forward towards the place where the wine was to be distributed. It was as if a band of demons had stolen into Paradise. They came on with gestures and exclamations fitting their appearance; brushed through the dancers;

broke in upon the sports: and as if under the special protection of the police, took up a position in front of one of the depôts of provisions, which were to be immediately scattered gratis to the crowd. As every eye turned on these savages, each tongue exclaimed—"*Ah, voilà les gens des Faubourgs!*" Aha! (said I to myself, like the Lord Chamberlain in Henry the Eighth):—

> "There's a trim rabble let in! Are all these
> Our faithful friends o' the suburbs?"

And I moved forward for the purpose of inspecting this odious deputation from all that is most odious in France. I shall not detail the result of my observations, but merely state, that every stage erected for the *distribution* was guarded at foot by a band of those miscreants, who are as anxious to wallow in wine to-day, as their fathers (or themselves perhaps) were to bathe in blood this day thirty years. At two o'clock the distribution commenced. Bread, meat, sausages, &c. were showered down on the multitude in a profusion that would have reminded me of the pleasant times when—

> "Streets were paved with penny rolls,
> And houses thatched with pancakes;"

if my memory had not been pre-occupied by painful recollections of a more recent epoch, and all my feelings in revolt against the demoralizing spectacle. But when the edibles were exhausted, and the wine-giving began—then, indeed, I blushed for the profanation of the day, and the degradation of my species. When I looked on the struggling wretches, raving, raging, and deluged in the flood, rushing forward with pots, kettles, and cans to catch the streaming liquor, and convey it to the barrels provided by each Faubourg as a common reservoir; while others, the great majority, glutted themselves into instantaneous drunkenness, rolled in the mud, and uttered yells, and songs, and blasphemy—it was then that all my indignation was roused—it was then that I cordially cursed the policy which debases and brutalizes a people, to give their rulers a better chance of crushing them. Then it was, that viewing national sobriety and decorum violated, as it were, at the foot of the throne, and by the royal ordonnance, I marvelled how a

king could be honoured, or a saint be glorified, or a man be bettered, or Heaven be pleased, by such a scene!

I pondered all this so deeply, walked so fast, and used such energetic action as I inwardly debated, that I saw I had attracted the remarks of some of the agents of that multocular monster—the Police; and fearing to be taken up for a malcontent, I wheeled away through the trees, and took French leave of the place.

BELGIAN SKETCHES.

INTRODUCTION.

The following papers are no more than they profess to be, *sketches* of a country which I have not known long enough to know it well. I have, however, seen sufficient of the world to know the fallacy of first impressions; and I am, therefore, cautious in forming opinions of nations, except on points of mere external physiognomy. In individuals, even *these* may be made subservient to their designs on the observer; but a whole population cannot change its face for the purpose of deception. There are certain striking features peculiar to a people. When *they* appear what they are not, the deception is engendered in the brain of the observer. He sees things under influences purely personal; he is affected by pre-conceived opinions; and measures the objects he looks at, by the scale of his own qualifications, not by their qualities. No wonder, then, that many learned and estimable authors are mistaken on self-evident points, and thousands of travellers after them, who love to take things for granted, and look at them with other eyes than their own. The generality of writers of "visits" and "tours," following in single file, like Indian warriors on a hostile expedition, know nothing to the right or left of the path, each being only mindful to tread in his predecessor's track. They thus form their notions of character from sources where it does not in reality exist; they mistake decomposed materials for masses of solid combination; and believe that they depict a nation when they describe its metropolis.

Another mistake of most authors appears to me their readiness to notice faults of character, in preference to merits. They slide over the smooth sward of national virtues, without remark; but cannot see a pebble on their path without making it a stumbling block. They prefer what is singular and striking to that which is general and passive. They find the former in national *defects*, for these, like individual failings, stand out in full relief. They are the "beaked promontories," against which most voyagers are afraid of striking, which they describe with a sudder, and fly from without examining. But each jutting rock is furnished with its beacon, not only to warn the stranger of peril, but to light him to safety in many a verdant recess. In the French revolution, for instance, the most marked objects, view it from what point we will, are its crimes. But if we boldly enter on the scenes of their commission, how much redeeming softness, what a fund of downy virtues may the mind repose on, to save us from misanthropy, and teach us to be men.

But just allowance is rarely made for the faults of nations. We forget that they often spring from the elements of purity — that a primitive virtue may run into excess— that a spark of brightness may be blown into a conflagration. Alarmed and offended at the glare, we would extinguish it entirely, and leave ourselves in the dark. It is not better to soften the light, than smother it? — to shade our eyes, than completely close them? — to leave ourselves at least the means of seeing our way through the labyrinth in which we are self-involved?

To come at the real, distinctive character of a nation is a matter of great difficulty: it is formed of such varying shades—such infinite blendings — so cameleon like in the shifting accidents of its moral atmosphere! It is easy to talk of fixed principles, and unbending distinctions. Where are they to be found? In individuals? Shew me the mind that *may* not be warped by circumstances—the nation that *must* not be changed by events. Are the English people what they were before the reformation—the French the same as before the revolution? And what may not Greece become again in the splendid renovation that awaits her? or Ireland, in the gradual removal of that mass of misrule, which still covers her prostrate energies?

But this, perhaps, is "wandering from the record." I

have now to deal with Belgium; and to no country in Europe do most of the foregoing observations apply more strongly. It is, I think, every way undervalued by travellers. An inconceivable ignorance as to its capabilities, even to its very boundaries,* is observable in many works upon it. Writers of *romance* can find no matter for their pens, and seem, with one truly brilliant exception,† to abandon it in despair. I nevertheless conceive it to be rich in subjects of great variety; and see in its many incongruous peculiarities abundant materials for illustration. I by no means attempt to say that I have been able to avail myself of them. They are objects that catch the eye of the traveller, but which the hand of the sojourner alone can reach.

I admit that there is much that is repulsive at first sight: many faults that shew nothing evidently redeeming. A Spaniard throws an air of chivalry into his fanaticism—the bigotry of a Belgian is as dull as it is gross. An Irishman "disguised" amuses by his humour; the bright spirit of his whisky evaporates in fun or fighting. The drunken Belgian is besotted as well as brutified—he is but a fermented beer-barrel. The avarice of a Dutchman is based on calculation—that of a Belgian on cunning. The petty cheateries on the road, the impositions of the swarm of blood-suckers that fastens on the traveller, are the plodding realities of roguery. A picturesque highwayman, or sentimental pickpocket, never appears. Elsewhere one is cheated sometimes; but *here* one never escapes. I met with more exactions, I lost more articles of dress, in a few months rambling through Belgium, than in twice as many years of travelling and residence in France. Yet, after all, I maintain that there is much of individual and natural good to be found, by those who will take the pains to seek it—and I (like my countryman) think "the trouble a pleasure."

The Belgians are reproached by strangers with having *no* national character. Their native writers labour hard to prove that they have two or three. I acknowledge myself to believe that they neither have, nor can yet have, any so marked and settled, as to be considered peculiarly their own. Centuries of subjection to various European powers, all

* *Les Fastes Universels* state the geographical divisions of Belgium to be precisely what they were under the Austrian dominion.

† Quentin Durward.

widely opposite to each other in manners and customs, have left among the Belgians evident traces of inconsistency, modified by time, and by one brief and brilliant era of liberty. The taint of each separate tyranny blends with the bright colouring of freedom; and their faults combine with courage, humanity, industry, and pride.

The Netherlands form at this moment a new country; and their various provinces are, for the first time, an acknowledged, independent, *uncontested* state. In this aspect they become a subject of peculiar interest. They possess moral varieties proportioned to their chequered scenery. They know their own limits, their masters, and their laws. Under the inspiring influences of a constitutional government, a liberal king, and a gallant heir-apparent, they take a present stand, and promise a continued place among "the nations;" and they inspire me at once with interest and inclination to sketch the outlines of a portrait which some abler hand will, in time, fill up and finish.

THE FRONTIER.

The view from Mount Cassel, on the northern frontier of France, is, I believe, unequalled in its kind. Prospects of infinitely greater variety, and consequently of superior beauty, abound even in France. England possesses landscapes, seen from many an eminence, of more isolated richness. Mountain scenery, in all countries, leave it no chance of comparison in point of actual extent—but it is nevertheless unrivalled.

The eye, taking in a circuit of about twenty miles depth from the point of observation, but particularly directed towards Belgium, reposes on a mass of vegetable wealth, a profusion of deep green, which might rival the savannahs on "Susquehanna's Side." This luxury of foliage marks the scene as one of nature's most fertile districts; and man has not been less prodigal in proofs of his preference. Upwards of thirty towns, and thrice as many villages, distinguishable from the eminence, shew that civilization has long been established in these verdant plains; and we may fancy the immense population that swarms over the teeming soil.

It is this combination which forms the extraordinary charm of the prospect. It is the vastness and the wealth united—the evidences of fertility and industry—the alliance between nature and art. But almost all that constitutes *beauty* in a landscape is wanting. There are trees and spires—that is all; and these in such monotonous profusion that they soon fatigue the sight. There are no rivers; not a hill except the one we stand on; no visible ruins; no contrast, in short, no *variety*—and, without *that*, what view is beautiful?

No sooner is the first burst of astonishment gone by—and such is certainly excited—than we begin to find fault with the scene; and what caused such wholesale surprise we instantly depreciate in detail. In the broad plain of verdure we see only what is "flat and stale," though we cannot in conscience add "unprofitable." The thin veil of vapour, which seemed a fine spun tissue, covering the fertile soil, now takes the aspect of an unwholesome mist, engendering disease, and shrouding death. The spires which rise up around seem emblems of an insolent religion, lording it over the land. Nothing strikes us as romantic, wild, or picturesque; and we prepare to plunge into this low region already tired of its monotony, and half suffocated by anticipation in its marshy atmosphere.

It matters little to the reader *when* it was that I stood on Mount Cassel, or whether it was on my first visit or my last that the sensations arose, which I, with the license of authorship, have supposed common to all; or whether my feelings received their colouring *from*, or imparted it *to* the scene. But however different persons might be variously affected by its individual peculiarities, there is one feeling which I am sure is general, not confined to the immediate spot which I describe, but arising on every view taken of a rich and pastoral landscape in solitude—and more strongly, in proportion as the weather is mild and the atmosphere serene. I mean the deep melancholy which steals upon the mind while contemplating a prospect unanimated by human beings, and unassociated with feelings of local attachment. All its beauties seem steeped in pensiveness, and an undefinable heaviness weighs the spirit down. Yet we do not the less enjoy the scene. Its charms are felt, perhaps the deeper, from the accompanying sadness in which they seem involved. The brighter the sun, the more powerful these sensations. If the distant hum of villages, or the chiming of church bells, come swelling on the air, they but add to the depression; and it is then the mind is most prone to long for those distant objects of affection, far beyond its covetous grasp, and who alone are wanting to turn the oppressive scene into a paradise of joy.

It was a glorious morning in midsummer, when I descended the paved causeway that winds round the hill; and, soon losing sight of the suburbs of Cassel, I was entering one of the passes of the vast and populous plain, which did not contain a thing to excite my interest, nor a being whom

I knew. As I had no particular object but *to break new ground*, I cared not whether I turned to the right or the left; and unfurnished with itinerary, map, or guide, it was totally by chance that I took the road to Poperingues, the nearest town within the Belgic frontier.

Approaching the confines of a new country, one naturally becomes watchful and anxious for the distinctive marks which are to tell you that you have quitted the old. We expect, at least, to find in the natives the proud consciousness of a line of demarcation, on one side of which they may stamp the imprint of their home-born attachment, and on the other, if needs be, fix their foot in prompt invasion of the *foreigner*. Sound policy in governments would surely encourage a separate *feeling*, although the differeuce were as unreal as the imaginary line that divides the globe. For national *prejudices* are not more odious than national *distinction* are wise. People divided from each other, by a sea, a river, a chain of mountains, or even a *rivulet*, as the Spanish and Portuguese, are totally distinct in character and habits, because they can point out their boundary; and, fancying some magic in the visible limit, attribute to the soil or the climate (which are the very same) results that arise from opposing institutions, founded on the feeling of a separate independence. Their pride is thus blended with the love of country; while hatred and contempt of the neighbour that *is* the rival, and *may* become the foe, seem the natural consequence—the dross in which the ore is enveloped. To shake off the one and preserve the other, to foster a generous rivalry and discourage a brute enmity, should be the true aim of civilization, and the great object of good government. But to give a people these feelings, in relation to their neighbours and themselves, a marked and evident boundary between them seems essential. Napoleon maintained that the Rhine was the natural limit of France. It, or some other as decided, most certainly is, in the point of view in which I consider the question. But the mockery of a separation, which exists between the Netherlands and France, is wholly destructive of the feelings I advocate, and actually blends the natives so completely together, that the very notion of a *frontier* seems absurd.

Trudging along the sandy defile which leads from Cassel to Poperingues, I vainly inquired for the frontier line. The former town having been until the last division of this part

of Europe, included in Flanders, although it is now in France, Flemish is spoken there exclusively, except for the accommodation of strangers. As I advanced into the country, the peasants understood no other language, and I was hard set to work my way, with the scanty knowledge I possessed. Not one of those I questioned was able to ascertain or describe the object I asked after. Some gave me to understand that *they* did not understand *me*. Others told me I was still in France—*but* that, if I continued my journey, I should infallibly reach Belgium. One man explained the frontier to be a narrow drain, cut in the soil *somewhere thereabouts;* but as to the exact spot, *that* I could not divine.

I at length gave up the point, and went forwards, through fertile tracks of what looked, notwithstanding its high state of cultivation, like reclaimed swamp, which sent up teeming crops of corn, flax, and tobacco, while hop plantations were thickly scattered around. The whole scene was rich, to exuberance. It was utterly cloying. It was "a land of honey," in which one's feet seemed to stick. The air was damp and clammy. The heavy smell of the flax, as it lay soaking in the stagnant pools, brought with it the worst associations of ill health. Ague and fever seemed abroad —and I hurried on, as if escaping from a lazar-house.

NATIONAL TRAITS.

WHILE I thus trudged on, oppressed with heat and that suffocation of feelings which I attempted to describe in my last sketch, I found a very important, though rather common-place, sensation stealing on me, in the guise of a downright fit of hunger. A house opportunely presented itself at the road side, with a broad announcement that there was no sacredness in it; but that all comers might, at all times, violate its sanctuary. A smartly painted board, fixed over the door, spoke thus plainly—

"HIER VERKOOPT MEN DRANKEN
"EN LOGIERT MEN TE VOET EN TE PEERD."*

"If," thought I, "the *lodging* be as neat as the *board*, a weary traveller may be well off in this hut: but who would be, of all callings on earth, a publican!—himself the slave of every passer by, while the very *penetralia* of his home is common to the commonest fellow who shakes the dust off his shoes over the threshold?"

"Give me a glass of beer!" said I, in lordly illustration of my moralizing, and in very good Flemish, although it was but plain English.

"Ya, Mynheer," said a clumsy wench, giving me the liquor.

"Brooed!" said I.

"Ya, Mynheer."

"Booter!"

"Ya, Mynheer;"—and she accordingly placed before me a lump of salt butter, and a *hoop* of coarse bread, which might have been used as a Brobdignagian wedding-ring, and served for separate maintenance afterwards. I got through my repast, which was eked out by a piece of abominable Dutch cheese, as quickly as possible, for I was thoroughly tired of my company—four or five boorish fellows, every

* Liquor sold here,
And lodging for man and beast.

man with a pipe in one corner of his mouth, and a huge glass of beer in constant application for admission at the other; while from between both issued a stream of smoke, and a stream of words (quite as vapoury, I dare say) in a jargon most odiously inimitable.

I was glad to be out on the road again, in all the noxious smells of soaking flax, the vapours of the stagnant pools, which surround every house—reservoirs of ready-made disease—and the monotony of poplar and willow, more sad, I thought, than cypress or yew.

I was almost inclined to face about, retrace my steps, and return into France; but still, being averse to retreating, as well as to judging by first appearances, I mechanically went forward, debating the matter in my mind. As I proceeded in the deep clay of the road which led to Poperingue, through large plantations of hops, which abound in this country, every step seemed to lead me into a deeper solitude. I saw no habitation, nor people, nor cattle—nothing but hops; and I gradually got into that dizzy sort of speculative mood which so often steals on us in solitude like this. Waking visions began to rise upon me; but they were interrupted by the distant crack of a whip. This simple sound brought me back into the world, and it seemed to re-people the unsocial district through which I waded. The oft-repeated and increasing signal announced the approach of some one; but I vainly listened over the unpaved road, for the sound of wheels, the natural accompaniment to the crack! crack! which echoed through the hop-poles.

Something more cheerful came instead—the cadences a man's voice, singing a joyous air, in excellent tone a tune. I longed for the companionship of the minstrel, b he who or what he might, even before I saw him. He sen his vocal introduction before him, as ordinary people send letter, or kings expedite their portrait; and I only hope that the recommendation of my coming acquaintance spok more honestly than the majority of those I have just alluded to.

The joyous vocalist at length came in view, round a turning in the narrow road on which we both journeyed, in the person of a cabriolet-driver; and he appeared in all the honours of his station, seated in a vehicle of the most clumsy construction, old, crazy, and weather-beaten, with a month's accumulation of mud and dust encrusted on al

parts. The horse, that was yoked to it with a mixed arrangement of rope and leather, was quite in keeping. He was blind of one eye, and lame of *all* legs; bare, bony, innocent of the curry-comb or brush, and, apparently, free from all other kind of vice.

The driver himself was a whip-in-hand discrepancy to his establishment. He was perfectly out of place, yet he sat and looked quite at his ease—a true man of the world. He was an uncommonly good-looking fellow, somewhere on the frontiers of thirty, (which are at about that age as difficult to define as those of Belgium itself,) of a rakish, devil-may-care aspect and air, flashily dressed in an open vest, which was as well covered with silk frogs, as though it had been a half-pay militia lieutenant's. A rainbow-coloured silk handkerchief was loosely slung round his neck, and a blue cloth cap, with a tassel hanging from the top, reclined on one side of his curly head.

I may here observe that these cabriolet-drivers are a race of bipeds very much distinct from all others. The species of carriage that they form a part and parcel of, is most abounding all through Belgium, infinitely more so than in France; for there we see established on almost every road, between even the very small towns, some public conveyance that starts at a fixed hour, some *patache*, or *charabane*, or the like, which gives passengers periodical opportunities of being shaken to a jelly, and jolted black and blue. But Belgium is greatly deficient in that way; every village inn, and almost every roadside drinking-house, possesses, instead, its one cabriolet or more, which conveys the single traveller at an easier rate, but on much harder terms. In fact, there is no fixed price for time or distance. All is optional with the innkeeper. But he is never capriciously *reasonable*; and heaven help the *voyageurs* who have no judge but his conscience! It never hears appeals.

As for the drivers, they are in general very odd fellows. They are the best informed men in the country, for twenty miles round, for that is about the extent of their driving, and consequently of their knowledge. But ask them a question as to aught beyond that, and they "don't know that country." From the town they live in, to that they drive to, there is not a house or a face that is not familiar to them. Still they have few words to throw away, and none of the knowing nods, and winks, and twists of the el-

bows which give to our coachmen such a peculia individuality. Your Belgium driver, snugly seated in the corner of his cabriolet, does not fatigue his neck, nerves, or muscles by exertions like these. An open look of recognition, or guttural grunt or two, is all that he deigns to bestow on his friends as he *goes*; but on his *return* he is sure to smoke a pipe, and drink a draught of beer, at every house that will afford fire for the first, and hospitality enough for the second. But in general, there is a matter-of-fact, road-book kind of accuracy about these fellows. They give you information as the pump gives water: you must eternally ply the handle; and they go at a jog-trot that would tire the patience of any one but their horses. Three miles an hour, in a by-road, is their regular pace. They are phlegmatic to the last degree. Nothing can upset them, any more than their vehicle; and both one and the other are so used to the rough work of life, that the easy indifference with which they jog along is quite a nuisance to a man who cannot so patiently endure it.

During the time that I observed the very different kind of animal from those which I have been describing, and wondering how he could belong to such a *genus*, he, of course, took his mental measure of me. He eyed me sharply for a minute or two, jogging on beside me as I walked along, and humming his *refrain* all the while; at length, pulling up, and coming to a full stop, he said, touching the tassel of his cap by way of salutation—

"Well, Sir, I can only say that if you were driving this return cabriolet, and I walking up to my ankles in this confounded road, I should not, most assuredly, let you pass me without asking for a place."

Following his example, I called a halt, and replied, that I preferred walking to going at a snail's pace in such a vehicle.

"Why, to be sure," said he, "we do not go at full gallop, and I cannot say much for the carriage; but it is not *that* I mean. A baggage-waggon would suit me as well as the king's coach, provided I had *company*. That's what I want. I hate being alone. I am obliged to sing myself hoarse, to keep up my spirits. In short, we are going the same road, it seems; I pass through Poperingue, and stop at Ypres, and if you are so disposed, Sir, I offer you this vacant seat, and shall be proud of your company."

So fair an offer and so original a compani[illegible]ere not to be resisted. I had no road to choose; so I stepped into the cabriolet, and away we went.

"Well, nothing surprises me more," *continued* my companion—for any little pause or interruption did not in the least seem to *break* the thread of his discourse, it only put a knot on it—"nothing surprises me more than to see any man on foot who is able to pay for a carriage or hire a horse. As for myself, the whole length of *my* walking is from the stable into the court-yard, and then, pop! I spring into my cabriolet, and feel as if the seat was part of me! But never mind that—there is no accounting for fancies. Well, Sir, and what do you think of this country? for I see you are a stranger. So am I, I might say; for though I was born here, and christened with beer and tobacco, like my countrymen, and had a good education thrown away upon me, I passed all the best part of my life in the Lancers of the Guard, and made my first bow to *Messieurs les Anglais* on the field of Waterloo. Nothing could tempt me to pass my whole life in such a country as this. The women, with an exception or two, are mere lumps of mortality, and the men have not one idea to knock against another!"

This harangue was not delivered as consecutively as it is written: it was spoken in fragments, interspersed with snatches of his song; and I have forgotten a good deal. *My* occasional replies and observations are not worth noting; but thus ran on the voluble tongue of my comrade, as we entered a little, close, asthmatic-looking village, smothered between high hedges and trees, and seeming impenetrable to a breath of air:

"But what signifies, after all, whether a man be Belgian or Frenchman? Yet the miserable beings of this place presume to quarrel about it. This is the frontier village, ridiculously enough arranged. The road, running in the middle, is the line *of* separation. The right hand cottages are in Belgium, the left in France. The widow Vanderbroeckellen, there, on one side, sells you tobacco at ten sous a pound; while her opposite neighbour, François Delaporte, must charge you ten francs; and at that house, on the French side, you may drink a bottle of wine for a franc, that is prohibited to the envious and thirsty dog who lives *en face*. Such are our custom-house laws, and a nice nest of smugglers they hatch here! And look at those two fellows, searchers of honest people—one French, the other Belgian—how they eye us from each side of the road! This village of La Belle, as it is called, I consider to be a stone-

and-mortar reproach against two governments that think themselves, no doubt, very wise; and as for the stupid dolts that people it, imagine their coming each half way into their common street to fight for the honour of their *different* countries!"

"I am heartily glad to hear *that*," thought I; "it *does* look like national feeling:" but I did not care to interrupt my companion, and we left La Belle behind us.

"There they go!" exclaimed he, as we were about a mile out of the village—"there they go, the real boys of the by-ways! Look at those light-footed fellows!" and I remarked, emerging from a little lane, five or six uncommonly active young men, but reckless and vagabond-looking, each with a stick in his hand, and four, five, or more bladders slung over his shoulder, and dangling against him.

"And who are they?" asked I.

"All smugglers," answered he; "brave, open, day-light fellows, who care no more for a gens-d'arme or custom-house officer, than for you or I. They have just come back from selling their tobacco in France, and are well laden with brandy in return. They have made a round to avoid the village, and are now on their road, fearing neither man nor devil."

As he spoke, two mounted gens-d'armes appeared—a loud shout from the smugglers gave the salutation—and, in an instant, the whole gang were across the hedges, and away into the thick-planted fields beyond. The gens-d'armes put spurs to their horses, drew their swords, looked in a terrible passion, and kicked up quantities of dust, galloped about, up some lanes, down others, swore, quite like troopers, and at last rode off in a quiet pace, side by side, having, no doubt, done their duty most faithfully.

We had not gone far when another official *satellite* of government, one of those infesters of the Belgic highways, a custom-house searcher, peremptorily stopped us, and, in no very civil mood, ordered us to descend. Then commenced a search of the carriage, of the most rigid nature. Every hole and corner was looked through and into, my small package rummaged, as though it contained a hogshead of brandy—and we were at last dismissed on our way.

While this examination went on, I said to the sworded and belted inspector—

"Do you know, my friend, that while you are wasting

your time here with this empty cabriolet, you are letting real game escape you in the woods yonder ?"

"Never mind that, Sir—I know my duty," was his reply.

"And take care of your *interest*," was my retort—for I was vexed with the fellow, and had no doubt of his being bribed by the smugglers.

But the most offensive *fixtures* of the roads, were the numerous huge wooden representations of the crucifixion, which always appear to me like blasphemous caricatures. They, nevertheless, excite different sensations in the country people, for at the foot of each of them, one is sure to see one or more persons at prayer. As we passed one of these, the driver observed, looking at the image—

"That is religion, as they call it. Very well! were I king, I would encourage it; for as long as a bungling carpenter and a little paint are in the country, I'll engage to rule it by the aid of these—the *true* magistrates of Belgium. Here is Poperingue—now do you think the burgomaster and eschevins have half the authority of that image? Not they, I promise you—and to tell the truth, little worthy of authority they are! Look at this nice little town, capable of thriving, if the rich inhabitants had common spirit. But there are full a dozen of them with an income of forty or fifty thousand francs a-year each—and how do they apply it? Put it up in a strong box, and live like poor burghers on little or nothing, smoking their pipe and drinking their beer in the pot-house, talking of hops, and playing their game of ninepins! Such is a fair specimen of the small towns of this country; and you may see how far civilization has crept in, when these louts wear bob-wigs, short breeches, striped stockings, and brass buckles in their shoes. No, the reformation of loose pantaloons has not even fallen on them—and how can such a country thrive?"

After we had baited the old horse, who ate well, and seemed as if he could go on at his own pace for ever, we took again to the road, for I had no inducement to stay in Poperingue, and we were soon on the well-paved causeway that leads to Ypres. During the two hours, consumed in covering the two leagues that separate these towns, my companion was not idle; and the following was the material part of his most fluent communications. I thought it worth noting down, for I own it really astonished me, coming from the source it did. His observations, at the time, appeared

excellent, and I was afterwards confirmed in my opinion that they were so, for a reason which the reader shall hear in good time.

"Why, Sir, the fact is, that Belgium is so little known to strangers, that one might call it sequestered from the rest of Europe. Its history, its geography, the national character, are all misunderstood, and that because the books of our days are composed from those of former times—because writers prefer seeing with the eyes of others to the trouble of using their own. When an author has proclaimed that superstition and fanaticism are the foundations of the Belgic character, he thinks he has done every thing. But let us examine the fact, and look back a little. After the fall of the Roman empire this country shared the common fate. Devastated and torn to atoms by its own people, Belgium gave birth to that spirit of restlessness, and we may say *mutiny*, which has been perpetuated even to our days. By and by came the Spanish domination, and that lasted too long not to have influenced our character, and we must confess that after three hundred years that taint is not effectually washed away. In the heroic struggle against the tyranny of Spain, Belgium, in making common cause with the Dutch, could not help coming into close contact with them. Religious differences separated them again, and there remained nothing to us from the association but a strong dose of avarice. The dominion of the House of Austria, our struggles for short-lived independence, the French Revolution, and the final settlement of our country into an acknowledged independent kingdom, must necessarily have all more or less influenced the manners and the character of the people. It is thus that, formed from so many various elements, they bear a portion of the features which distinguish each of those nations; and it is the indecision of character consequent on this, that gives them a physiognomy so difficult to be seized by the pencil of the writer. We are neither Germans, Spaniards, nor French. We have picked up from each a little of what is good, and rejected a great deal that is bad. We have remained Belgians, neither more nor less, with all that contrariety of character so puzzling to strangers who have not studied it. If a Belgian appears indifferent and cold, it is less from reality than for convenience sake; he is economical without being actually avaricious; studious and fond of ease; unimpassioned; averse to novelties; at

once sober and gluttonous; modest, yet presumptuous; cold in his amours; and terrible in his enmities—he seems, I must allow, an eternal problem of indecision, and displays a plurality of character that exists but in him."

This was, I think, the last sentence I heard from my lecturer, for an accident happened to me which I trust may not occur to my readers—I fell fast asleep; and we were at the gates of Ypres when I awoke. My companion was carelessly humming a tune, and when I opened my eyes, he "hoped I had had pleasant dreams." I assured him I was much edified by the information he had given me, and ventured to express my surprise at all he had uttered.

"Why, Sir," said he, with a most consequential and imposing air, "the fact is, I observe a little, think a good deal, and sometimes read; and I am happy to give any information in my power to a stranger whenever I happen to fall in with one. This is the *Bras d'Or*, the best inn in Ypres. Let me set you down here, and bid you farewell; only recommending you not to stay more than a day or two in this place, the unhealthiness of which is proverbial, as a sickly-looking person, all over Flanders, is called 'a death's-head from Ypres.' Adieu, Sir."

I returned his civilities in the way most congenial to his expectations, and we parted excellent friends. I had a capital dinner, most comfortable lodging, and civil attendance; and I strolled out, to pass away the evening, rather than from any particular curiosity about the place. I walked round the ramparts, out at one of the gates, and in at another, and paid my homage to the royal arms, sculptured over it, and was duly appalled by the open-mouthed lions, each with a blunderbuss under his arm, meant, no doubt, to inspire a wholesome dread of kingly authority in the mynheers and vrowes of the neighbourhood, as they came to market.

When I re-entered the town, I stared about, like any other stranger, and at last discovered a bookseller's shop. I went in, and took up a smart little work called 'Tablettes Belges.' The very first sentence of the introduction struck me as not quite new. I read on, and, to my infinite surprise, and no small amusement, I found there every word of the cabriolet-driver's essay on the national character, and a great deal more than he delivered, which the rogue had got by heart, and passed for his own! I could not be angry with

him: it was an innocent plagiarism; and I sincerely hope that if ever the author discovers it, he will imitate my indulgence, in consideration of the very original specimen of national character offered by the culprit.

TOWNS AND CHURCHES.

"God made the country, and man made the town."
COWPER.

THE exterior aspect of cities, or their examination *merely* as works of art, has never had the slightest charm for me. The cold admiration which we give to domes, or spires, or columns, oppresses rather than exhilarates us, if some associating link of feeling does not excite an interest for the object. I can wander for weeks across a foreign district of *country*, without seeking acquaintances or wanting society. The ever springing varieties of nature give ample occupation to the mind; but one day spent alone in a town is intolerable. It is the very worst species of solitude, for it generates discontent with one's own desolateness, and envy for the social intercourse which seems shared by every one else. We do not consider, and console ourselves with the fact, that other strangers are labouring under the very same feelings that oppress us. Even if they are, we cannot sympathise with those we do not know; and in our solitary selfishness we only dwell on our own discomfort.

What is to be done to obtain relief? To eat one's breakfast, dinner, and supper? Then to sleep away the night? But the intervals between? "There is the rub." How to kill time—the common enemy—and to give him an easy and quiet death, the infliction of which will lie light on one's conscience. For my own part, I have a regular routine of methods, which I follow with systematic constancy, whenever I happen to find myself in the dreary situation I allude to. I first examine carefully all the engravings, bad or indifferent, that decorate the walls of "mine inn;" and then thumb over scrupulously the torn old almanacks, or com-

non-place pamphlets, which may (by particular good luck) be on a dusty shelf, or in a corner cupboard. I then saunter out into the streets, discarding all the officiousness of the grinning and ragged ciceroni that offer their aid, and also the swaggering assistance of the saucy varlet, ycleped on the continent *commissionaire*, who, with a smattering of bad English, forces his services upon each new comer.

Fairly launched into the unexplored intricacies of the place, my first object is, if possible *to lose myself*, because a quarter of an hour may be laudably consumed in recovering my way. I sometimes clamber up the hundred, and heaven knows how many steps, of some tower or steeple, and gaze over the parapet on the tiles and slates below me, in great wonderment that the tops of all the houses, and the houses of all the towns should be so marvellously alike. The contracted streets and the pigmy passengers only make me moralize on the narrowness and littleness of mankind and their ways, but I wanted no such factitious elevation above my fellows to impress the lesson upon me. So down I go again, not much the better, and certainly not a bit the wiser for my ascent, and I look up at the buildings I had just been looking down upon, a gazing illustration of the ups and downs of life.

But straggling about in that kind of way, I often chance to stumble upon some half-buried association of history or romance, or knock my head against some legend or superstition, projecting beyond the crumbling walls of an old mansion or decaying monument. These I generally treasure up for after manufacture; and if I consider them worth any thing, I am, at any rate, not churlish about their value. I certainly have not reaped a fertile harvest in the towns of Belgium. There is, generally speaking, a stagnant air of insipidity hanging over them like a cloud. Every attempt at gaiety seems abortive; the discordant vivacity of their *Carillons*—their miserable attempts at illuminations and fireworks. Then the ungraceful sameness of female costume, and still more unpleasant sameness of female occupation—every window in every house garnished with a languidly industrious fair one, knitting her stocking, and prying into the very secrets of the streets by means of her pair of lateral mirrors.

Churches, those favourite lounging places of my countrymen, afford me but unfrequent sanctuary, in my capacity

of time-killer. I am not over fond of expiating that crime at the moment of its commission, in the aisles of a cathedral. There is too much sameness in the decorations, the pillars, pictures, altars, and pulpits, to excite me; and I have another reason for not caring much to frequent the continental Catholic churches, which has less of propriety than *amour propre* in it. I make it a rule never to look into guide-books beforehand, for information as to what I *ought* to look at, and what I *should* admire. A sort of perverseness immediately opposes itself to the dictations of *soi-disant* taste, wherever and whenever it assails me. But I have sometimes examined such oracles *afterwards*, to find if my untaught notions of beauty or proportion tallied with the received *dicta* of the learned; and it has more than once happened to me to find that I had wasted much of my admiration, and thrown away my delighted scrutiny on objects perfectly worthless; while I passed by with indifference or disapproval *chef-d'œuvres* that I ought to have almost idolized. Now on these occasions I invariably stuck fast to my own predilection, and laughed the dictators to scorn; and I got into several scrapes, and arguments, and disputes in consequence. But as I have no pride in the affectation, or the fact of *singularity*, I think it better to keep out of the way of such mishaps. This, after all, is a puerile reason for not being a church-gazer; and if I had no better, I should not have recorded it; but I *have* a better, at least I think so. In any catholic country, but particularly in one so pre-eminently devout as Belgium, I feel a considerable objection against straggling through the sacred edifices, at all times occupied by many pious individuals, to whom the intrusion of heretical curiosity must appear very indelicate and indecorous. These places of worship are, it is true, *open houses*, but not of *entertainment*. Their pictures and statues are placed in them not as mere objects of art, but as incitements to devotion; and those (and I avow myself one) in whom they produce but feelings of a very contrary description, had better leave them unexamined, than force their way through the prejudices and piety of a whole people, or, as it may happen, the very worthiest portion of it. Neither do I like the gorgeousness of their temples; their "*graven images*" cause me a painful sensation; and I revolt from the mental and bodily prostration of intelligent christians, in a way that I believe to be foreign to the true spirit of their religion and its

founder. Still I venerate religion even in what I think its degeneracy, and I would not wilfully insult or give pain to the lowliest fanatic who thinks he glorifies his Maker by debasing himself: and therefore, it not being my duty to teach the difference between debasement and humility, I seldom do more than listen under the porch, to the solemn pealings of the organ, or take a stolen stroll into the body of the building, at a very early or late hour, when the shades of twilight shroud the sacred pile, and a mystical obscurity seems to envelop at once the building, its occupants, and its purposes. For it is not alone to objects of religion that religious edifices are devoted. Many a worldly or worthless motive brings the mock christian there; and such scenes have ever been considered legitimate situations for subjects of romance. Veiled nuns and hooded monks are the very staple of romantic fiction; and I believe that, even at this day, occurrences take place under the agency of such actors, equalling in mystery and horror those which the most intrepid novelist has heretofore detailed or invented. Human nature is, in fact, ever the same; and if crime does not decrease under the operation of civilization and knowledge, there is no reason that it should do so, within a convent's walls, from which both are excluded. One circumstance came to my hearing (I will not exactly say to my knowledge) of recent occurrence, and I believe of no doubtful authenticity. I will venture to relate, without exactly vouching for it; but it was told to me as fact, and was publicly believed to be such.

THE CONVENT CELL.

On a bleak and gloomy morning in the month of March, 1827, two travellers walked up the aisle of the church of St. ———, in one of the chief towns of the Netherlands. They were evidently strangers, not only to the place, which they gazed at with curiosity, but to the manners and feelings of the congregation, for they were observed to walk carelessly past the *Benitier*, without dipping their fingers in the blessed water; nor did they bend their knees as they crossed before the altar, while they carelessly sat down, on two of the rush-bottomed chairs, with high backs and a ledge on the upper bar, intended for the support of the kneeling pious, and the prayer-books used in their devotions.

The strangers produced no books, nor did they evince any profound respect for the celebration of the service, which inspired such reverence in those around them. The half-uttered expressions and mystical attitudes of the priest, the shrill responses of the boys who "served the mass," the tinkling of the bell, which was echoed by the beating on the breasts of the assembly, and even the elevation of the Host, which caused the heads of the crowd to bend in awful humility to the earth, failed to excite in the strangers any thing beyond a listless gaze of wonderment, or a casual smile, while an expression of blended compassion and contempt seemed to play round their lips.

Still there was nothing of actual levity in their manner; nothing, in short, which any liberal-minded devotee (if such things are) might not have excused in the bearing of two heretics, unaccustomed to Roman Catholic rites, and acting from the impulses of inexperience and youth. For they were both young, under five-and-twenty; and they had that reckless and independent air which marks the citi-

zens of a free country. They were, in fact, Americans, who with a full fund of health, money, and ardour for variety, and a sufficient acquaintance with modern languages, had just arrived in Europe, and were starting on their journey in quest of knowledge and adventures.

They had landed a day or two before at Ostend, from London, and this was their first visit to a Roman Catholic church, in a Roman Catholic country.

But although the celebration of mass seemed little to interest or excite either of the strangers, they were both, and one of them particularly, affected in no slight degree, by the appearance of six or eight nuns, who belonged to a convent which adjoined the church, and who were seated high apart from the rest of the congregation, in a half-concealed gallery appropriated to their sole use, in the immediate neighbourhood of the altar.

But these *religieuses* seemed not to shrink entirely from observation. They were mostly young; but, with one exception, they did not possess any powerful attraction, beyond what was associated with their interesting, and to the strangers, their romantic profession. We may easily imagine the effect produced upon the republicans, alive to every illustration of European *picturesqueness*, as they listened to the solemn pealing of the organ, gazed on the antique pile, and fixed their minds, as well as their observation, on the group of devoted females, more interesting than all by which they were surrounded. But the friends differed in character. One was calm, calculating, and cold: the other ardent, susceptible, and enthusiastic. The one looked on the nuns as he would have observed a series of historical paintings, as documents of manners and customs, the origin and effects of which he employed himself in tracing. The other entered into the contemplation of "the sisters" with all the warmth of flesh-and-blood excitement, mused on their abandonment of the world, and would have pierced the secret recesses of their hearts.

He was, however, after a short time, roused to a more minute and personal train of thought, by observing, beyond any possibility of doubt, that one of the nuns, who had most pretensions to beauty, fixed her looks upon him with an uncommon intenseness, and in a manner so remarkable, as to cause him at length considerable embarrassment. There was something in the expression of her countenance, and in

the determined scrutiny of her gaze, that made him almost shudder. She was handsome certainly. Her features were regular and marked; but she was pale to sallowness, and her dark eyes had a restlessness of motion, that seemed caused by an unquiet mind.

The young American gradually recovered from his embarrassment, but he scarcely regained his self-possession, for the feelings which succeeded were somewhat bewildering. Vanity, the natural weakness of a youthful mind, conscious that it was allied to a handsome person, began to work strongly on the feelings of the stranger, and his heart bounded, and his head seemed to swim round, at the thought that his appearance had excited some irresistible tenderness in the breast of the nun. The notion that she had fixed her thoughts on him, in preference to his friend who sat beside him, gratified him in a double sense; and his bosom being thus softened by the inward workings of self-love, became more susceptible to the impressions stamped on it by another. The consequence was, that he began to fancy an interest stronger and deeper than he really felt; and giving himself up to the delusion, he had no doubt of the existence of a secret and unaccountable sympathy between *himself* and the *religieuse*.

He felt his cheeks glow, and he gave to his looks the tenderest expression of which they were capable. He saw an answering flush rise on the pallid brow of the nun, and a smile, that thrilled through him—but not with unmixed delight—played for an instant on her colourless lips. Her eyes then sank down, and her face resumed its calm and sculptured look.

He still fixed on her his fascinated gaze; yet while he did so, a strange mixture of sensations crowded upon him. Did she already love him? Could *that* be possible? and was her present downcast air, the effect of the struggle which modesty had sustained against passion? Then she might be unhappy—ill treated—tyrannized over; and she might have fixed her suppliant hopes on him for protection and redress. But again, some dark and treacherous design might have prompted her magnetic gaze! The last misgiving he instantly abandoned, as unmanly and unjust. But one point was certain—she had fixed upon him in a marked and singular way; she had acknowledged his looks and replied to them; he was so far committed, and she com-

promised. There might be risk in following up the adventure—but it might lead to happiness—or what is considered so by the unbridled ardour of warm and youthful hearts; and come what might, he resolved not to shrink from the result.

Absorbed in these agitating reflections, he did not remark the priest quitting the altar and entering the vestry, nor the congregation one by one departing from the church. He only saw the one object of his deep attention, and he did not even observe that her companions had left their places, and that she alone occupied the gallery.

His friend, who had for some minutes closely watched him, at length recalled him to recollection; and in a suppressed tone rallied him on his reverie, and on the intense manner in which he gazed on the remaining nun, who seemed buried in the depth of devotion. Thus roused, and brought to himself, the young man prepared to accompany his friend, ashamed of the seriousness which he had betrayed, and which he felt that he could not shake off.

They were on the point of quitting their places and retiring from the almost deserted church; the friend of the young lover, for so we must call him, had turned round and made a few steps in the direction of the door, and the lover himself was about to follow, when his parting look at the nun was answered by an imploring glance from her quick raised eyes, and a momentary, but intelligible motion with her finger that he should remain.

These ambiguous communications made him start, and almost tremble. He could not comprehend, nor had he time to question the motives of the nun. He had promptly to form his decision—and he at once resolved to stay; he therefore stepped quickly after his friend—avowed his intention to linger a little longer in the church—received with a smile the bantering caution which told him to beware—and then, as his friend went out, he sauntered awhile up and down the aisles, in apparent examination of the pictures and statues; and in a little while he was satisfied that the church was wholly deserted, except by himself and the object of his growing solicitude.

He felt an awkward anxiety to address her; but there was an awfulness in her bearing that irresistibly repelled him, and he felt himself completely the creature of her will. She threw an occasional look, in reply to his impatient

glances, which told him he must suppress his impetuosity and wait her pleasure. He resigned himself willingly to the course of the adventure, every moment adding to his excitement, and a tumult of wild sensations revelling in his breast.

After some time his fascinator rose slowly from the place where she had so long knelt; and descending by a back stair from the private gallery, she passed by the rear of the grand altar; and once more took a kneeling posture in a narrow recess opposite a little shrine, where burned a single lamp. He followed her movements, encouraged, painfully, by her doubtful smile, and the suppressed gesture, which pointed out to him the position near her which she wished him to take.

He at length leaned against a pillar, his hands *folded* across, and as if in close observation of a fine statue of the Virgin, and within a few yards of the real object of his almost breathless attention.

With her head low bent, and inclined towards him, while she turned over her beads with much apparent devotion, she asked him, in a deep whisper,

"Do you understand French?"

"Yes," murmured he.

"Do you speak it?"

"Not sufficiently to express your influence on me."

This was answered by her wonted smile—"Good God, is it *satisfaction* or *triumph!*" thought the American.

"If you can see any thing in me to interest you," continued she, "are you inclined to do me a service?"

"*Am* I!" replied he, with energy—"try me—put me to the proof!"

"It is no trifle," said she, solemnly.

"Any thing is trifling that can enable me to serve you; for any thing short of death command me!"

"And if death *did* cross your path in this adventure?" exclaimed she, with a full expression of voice, and a piercing solemnity of look.

"By Heavens I'd spurn even it," cried he; "you have exalted me to a pitch of excitement, I know not how or wherefore."

"You are an enthusiast!" said she, a somewhat more softened expression blending in her smile.

"I know not what I am; but it is you who have made me so, be it what it may. I am new in this country—I seem to walk in enchantment—I swear myself yours!"

Here irresistibly followed the impulse which bade him to kneel down, and he directed looks as fond and thoughts as fervent at his neighbour nun as ever devotee could have meant for the pretended object of her present worship. The nun smiled one final smile of ghastly solemnity. The American could less than ever read its meaning. She had evidently a great purpose in view. She had selected him for her agent—he was bound to her he knew not how.

"I am satisfied with you," resumed she. "I believe you to be a man of honour; and that fine person and striking face cannot be allied to an ignoble soul: I feel myself safe in your hands. You perceive that the rules of my order are not the strictest; but their discovered infringement is ruin; and I am now infringing them. I can speak to you no more at present—I have run a fearful risk. But meet me outside that little portal to-night at nine. I will admit you punctually as the clock strikes. Vespers will be over, and the church in solitude. You must not speak; but trust to me: follow me, and count on my gratitude."

"May I, then, hope?"

"You may hope every thing from a grateful woman, who admires you, and *must* love you, if you serve her as she expects."

"Enough—you must run no further risk—at nine I will be at the little portal."

"Adieu!" murmured she, in a soft tone; and in a minute the American had left the church.

As he passed away in high exultation, and just as he turned one of the massive buttresses which supported the venerable pile, a man, in a sort of half-official uniform, armed with a sword, turned his eyes from an advertisement pasted against the wall, and fixed them on the American.

"A word with you, Sir, if you please," said he, in tolerable French, taking off his three-cornered and orange-cockaded hat.

"What can you have to say to me, my friend?" asked the American, in a haughty and somewhat abstracted air.

"Why, just this much, Sir; that, as a stranger, you ought to be cautious of your conduct. Your indecorous and flippant manner during the celebration of mass has made you a

marked man; and the friendship of an agent of the police, willing to protect you, is not perhaps to be spurned."

"Oh, I am quite equal to my own protection in all cases!" proudly replied the stranger. He was in that state of mind that makes a sanguine man think every thing *must* go well with him, and that it would be a disgrace, even in difficulty, to look for the help of others. Besides, he thought this man might, perhaps, be some impostor, lying in wait for foreigners, to extort money from them under false threats of danger and vain promises of support. "You may pass on," said the American.

"You may repent this!" replied the other.

CHAPTER II.

The American found his countryman awaiting him at the hotel; and, after a few preliminary arrangements of thought, suited to the important occasion, he told him every thing that had passed, from the time he had quitted him in the church, until he had himself left it in the sole tenantry of the mysterious nun.

The friend, on hearing this confession, felt perhaps, at first, a slight sensation of jealousy and envy, at the better fortune of his companion. But as they were sincerely attached to each other, and had started under a fair agreement of non-interference in their mutual adventures, *that* feeling passed lightly over, and only left an anxiety for the perfect safety of his fellow traveller.

He did not exactly like the aspect of the affair. There was too much romance in it, if *real*, too much trickery, if *pretence*, to suit his steady temperament and well regulated habits. He thought it strange in any way; although he could not help admitting that his friend was a striking sort of fellow, one likely to inspire a feeling more than ordinary, in a woman accustomed to adventure, and having an object in view. It was then again possible that all this parade about doing her some secret service might be merely meant to heat his imagination and inflame his feelings. But what if

she really had some quarrel to avenge, and that she had artfully worked on him, and meant further to do so, to involve him in some matter of serious danger? The *friend* turned all things studiously in his mind; while the *principal* carelessly paced the room with buoyant heart, and thinking (if he thought at all) that nothing could thwart his success, or mar his coming happiness.

Never did day pass heavier or seem longer than did this to the lover. Hours and half hours, as they sounded their monotonous chimes from the various belfries, sending out the same tones of tedium and delay, worked him up to a fit of nervous fermentation. His friend did all he could to allay it, but he participated himself in the anxiety, which spurred them on, while it seemed to retard them from the end of the adventure.

Every plank of the boarded and sanded salon which they occupied, was paced in unreckonable repetitions. Every possible method to hasten the wings of time vainly employed. At length all in-door efforts being exhausted, a walk without was proposed, accepted, and undertaken. But scarcely had the friends sallied forth, when they were assailed by various insulting symptoms, from a group of boys, among whom some men were intermingled, who seemed to have lain in wait for, and were now resolved to annoy them. The lover walked on for some time, unconscious of what passed around him, for he was of that fearless spirit that does not anticipate danger, and he never thought of the warnings of the police agent. Besides which, he was at the moment borne far away, on the wings of the abstraction to which he had delivered up his mind.

His friend was more observing and sensible of peril, though a firm and decided man at the time of its approach. He therefore spoke to his absorbed companion, and asked him if he could account for the evident marks of hostile feeling in the conduct of the persons near them.

"Not I," replied he. "I neither observed them, nor think them worth observation. I suppose they are only venting their curiosity, for we can have excited no other feeling."

"I differ with you, my friend. The expression of those faces means more than that, and some of those fellows are muttering some insolent jargon. Yonder, however, is a man in an official dress, one of the police, perhaps; it

would be well to put ourselves under his protection, I think, for no glory is to be gained in a contest here."

"Yes, that is the very fellow who told me I was a marked man, and offered to take care of me. I now remember him."

"A marked man? For what?"

"For not having been devout enough at mass, I believe."

"Indeed! then we must be cautious. We stand on perilous ground; for if notice has been taken by this bigotted people of any indecorum in our bearing, it might go hard with us. I will speak to that man, whom you seem to slight so much."

So saying, the cautious traveller at once approached the police officer, and addressed him; but he received nearly the same sort of reception which his friend had lately given to the municipal object of his application. The fellow put on a fierce air, and replied to the request that he would not suffer two foreigners to be insulted by a parcel of ragamuffins,

"Ay, now that my assistance *is* required, you are both civil enough; but you may *now* take care of yourselves, and let your friend suffer for his haughty rejection of my offers."

"My good fellow," replied the American, "you must attribute any thing in the manners of that gentleman to his imperfect knowledge of the habits of this country, and of the language perhaps. I apologize for him, and request that you will now, without hesitation, just walk with us to our hotel."

With these words he stamped an impression on the policeman's hand, which left its tangible mark there as he closed his fingers upon it; that impression, which, following such a discourse to such a person, is like the seal upon a letter, giving authenticity and consequence to all that has gone before.

"Well, I'll tell you so far," said the police-man, *feeling* the amount of the piece of money, which he did not deign to look at, "you are a civil and fair-spoken gentleman, and I'll not refuse your request. I'll walk with you, and nothing shall happen to *you*, I promise you. Let your proud companion take care of himself, as I said before; I told him he might repeat his incivility, and he *may* yet."

"Well, then," said the American, "I'll just take him

under the arm, for I must not desert him, you know, and you will keep close to *me*."

He accordingly took his friend's arm in his, and extricated him from the gathering crowd, in reply to whose insults he threw looks of most aristocratical, republican contempt; and, escorted as agreed upon, they soon regained their hotel. Arrived there, these late occurrences were soon forgotten by the most prominent actor in the events I am recording. His mind reverted to the one object of its anxieties, and fixed itself upon it. His friend, who saw what had just passed in a more serious view, resolved that the result of his companion's adventure once over, they should immediately quit the place; and he accordingly desired post-horses to be in readiness for their carriage at a very early hour the next morning.

This point arranged, dinner was ordered unusually early, to break the tediousness of the unemployed day; and no sooner was it dispatched than the friends regretted it was not to come over again, as the vacant hours of evening seemed to gape before them like the mouth of some drear and unexplored cavern. To add to the discomfort of the situation, the decline of day was accompanied by most dismal weather. Rain and hail rattled against the windows, and gusts of wind swept mournfully through the streets.

One resource alone was left to the friends—wine! and to that genial comforter and care-killer they betook themselves. They drank freely and fairly by their coal fire; and in the warmth of conversation they soon became inattentive to, and undisturbed by, the intrusive pattering against the closed shutters, and the boisterous swell of the increasing storm. Their conversation, following the capricious course which imagination suddenly turned into, reverted to home, to old friends, dear connexions, and early days, when, happily, innocent of the fierce joys of manhood, the unreckoned years flew by. In these far and bygone recollections the matter of the moment was for a while forgotten; and hour after hour chimed out, astonishing the friends at their quick succession. At length the earliest clock struck nine. The lover, whose temporary abstraction to other days and distant scenes had not left him unwatchful of the actual march of time, knew that although nine o'clock was *sounded*, half past eight was *meant*—half an hour being thus, according to the habit of the Belgian belfries, announced in advance, for

some better reason, no doubt, than the most obvious one—to puzzle the heedless, and tantalize the watchful citizen.

The lover sprang from his chair, startling his friend from a reverie of home and happiness. But he quickly understood the cause of the abrupt movement, and he prepared to accompany the adventurer as far as he might, consistent with *propriety* (if I may apply the term in such a case) and with *prudence*, as regarded the safety of his friend. There was a full half hour to spare before the time of rendezvous, and the friend pressed strongly, but unsuccessfully, the uselessness of quitting the hotel, and braving the storm, which raged more violently than ever, before the few minutes required to reach the church. But, warmed anew with wine, and all the ardent feelings of his nature in action, he cared alike for weather or advice, and in spite of both he put on his hat, and threw his cloak around him, declaring that further delay was intolerable, and that he *must* be gone.

His friend, finding him determined, also equipped himself for going out, and a sharp contest immediately took place on the question, which answered admirably the friend's object, to gain time. The lover insisted on his friend's remaining at home, smiling at the notion of danger, and protesting strongly against another partaking the unpleasantness of an adventure the happiness of which he could not share. The friend, however, was obstinate, in his turn; and the contest ended in both leaving the house together, and making their way, through all the obstructions of wind, rain, and darkness, to the gloomy mass of building which the lover recognized as the church of St. ———; and they took their station in one of the most covered recesses, formed by the projection of the grotesque and ancient architecture.

In this imperfect shelter, shivering in cold and wet, they felt the heavy minutes brush past them with their leaden wings. No object was abroad, save the figure of a man who twice crossed the nook they were concealed in, but of whom they could distinguish nothing more.

At length the first stroke of the *ninth* hour came hollowly borne towards them, by a descending gust of wind. The lover seized his friend's hand, pressed it in nervous, yet triumphant agitation, whispered farewell! as faintly as if the divine walls might divine his secret in the word, and rapidly stepped in the direction of the little portal, at some paces distant, round an angular projection. For a moment his

friend remained motionless, but recovering himself, he followed, with long and cautious strides, the flying footsteps that guided him on. He was in an instant close to the lover, and giving his strained observation to the portal, which he could barely distinguish, he saw it darkly open, just wide enough to admit the anxious expectant, who rapidly glided in. It was instantly closed again; and the friend, with a feeling of heaviness and oppression, he could neither successfully combat nor account for, turned from the church as the ninth stroke was hurriedly borne away into the clouds by the rude blast that rioted through the towers and turrets. The same figure that had crossed them before now passed still closer to him; and exclaiming, loud enough to silence the roaring wind, "Take care of yourself—you had been better at your hotel!"—it disappeared in the gloom.

"This does look like danger of some secret kind," thought the American, as he vainly attempted to pierce the darkness in the direction which the figure took. "I must if possible know more;" and he instantly followed with the intention of stopping and questioning it. But his attempt was vain. Favoured by the deep gloom, the figure had turned into some of the narrow lanes close to the church, and was no where to be seen.

"Take care of myself!" exclaimed the American. "If I have need of care, how much more has my brave and reckless friend! No, I must not see my hotel again until he is free from this affair. Here will I watch for his return. I am not worse off than the sentries who pace the unsheltered ramparts—this is my post."

He regained the little portal, and buttoning his large travelling coat tightly about him, he stood close under the porch, which protected him from the straight falling rain, but by no means against the sudden and violent squalls which at times gathered the rain like a shroud, as they swept along, and dashed it in a liquid sheet full against the voluntary sufferer. In a short time he was thoroughly drenched, and so benumbed with cold, that he was fain to quit his station, and move about in open exposure to the storm, to force his blood to circulate, and give action to his cramped limbs.

In this comfortless state of body, which was however unheeded in the increasing agitation of his mind, the staunch and anxious friend continued to pace close before the portal,

while the chimes told three times over their half hour's monotonous attempt at melody. The quarter of the town where stood the church, was inhabited almost entirely by the poorer orders of the people, and one by one the lights had disappeared from their wretched dwellings. It was near eleven o'clock, and all was desolate: the rain had ceased, the wind had died away, and the American almost wished for the fierce fellowship of the storm once more, in preference to the dismal calm, which, spite of his natural intrepidity, made him shudder.

Almost exhausted by mental and bodily agitations he had actually resolved to strike for admittance at the portal; and in case of failure in that attempt to acquire intelligence of his friend, he determined to demand the assistance of the military guard, which he had observed to be stationed in the chief square of the town.

For the purpose of putting the first of these resolutions into effect, he approached the portal, and raised the little knocker, but his hand refused to strike. A feeling crossed his mind of the objection to so direct and personal an interference. He thought that it might give offence to his friend, who was perhaps after all in perfect safety, and only detained by the happy consequences of his adventure. It might compromise the safety—the life even—of the female concerned. It was perhaps indecorous, premature, unnecessary. He paused, and resolved at length to wait still half an hour, before he took any more decided step than to continue his watching.

He accordingly recommenced his steady pace, and had scarcely made three or four turns, when he heard the hinges of the portal slowly sound. He instantly placed himself close, but concealed from view. The portal was opened and shut, with the greatest speed, and the least possible noise. The figure of his friend was visible to the anxious American, and he rejoiced at his return from that place of peril, and was only restrained by a sense of delicacy from abruptly accosting, and congratulating him. He was quite close behind him, and he observed him to move forward hurriedly, but not with that light and easy movement which marked his usual carriage. The friend stepped on, and was astonished and grieved to distinguish, almost beyond a doubt, that the lover bore beneath his cloak, and supported on his shoulder, a burthen, which from its length and

ral shape was, as well as he could form a judgment, a human form.

This discovery, or almost certain conjecture, perplexed and distressed him greatly. The imprudence, the risk, in carrying off this nun, and intruding such an embarrassment on their travelling arrangements, appeared unwise, ill-considered, and unpardonable in the highest degree. But his first impulses of angry regret were suppressed by the forgiving friend, and he determined to follow closely the movements of the offender to be able to judge what were his plans and intentions. He accordingly kept on his track, just near enough to run no risk of losing him, nor of being in his turn counter-watched, either by the lover or the prize he carried. He easily perceived there was little danger of the latter observing him, for the cloak was kept carefully covering the head, which reclined loosely on the bearer's shoulder. He heard not even a whisper, as they went along, and he felt something solemn, and even unholy, in the silence, unbroken but by the heavy tramp of his friend's footsteps under his sacrilegious burthen.

After a little time, in which they traversed several by-streets, through which the lover passed, as though he had been directed well, they reached one of those canals with which the town abounded, and the lover unhesitatingly descended one of the flights of steps, which facilitate the landing of goods from the barges, and the embarkation of persons employed.

"Heavens!" exclaimed the watchful friend to himself, "can he be wild enough to bear her off at night, in some open boat—God knows where! Where or how will this adventure end?"

He placed himself close to the quay wall, and looked over the parapet. He saw his friend on the steps; there was no boat of any kind stationed near or in sight—yet the lover continued to descend!

"What can this mean? what frantic feat can be destined to conclude this affair?" muttered the careful guardian, as he watched with intense interest; and *as* he watched, he observed the object of his care to disencumber himself of his burthen; a figure in black emerged from beneath the cloak, and a heavy plunge in the stagnant water was the signal of its disappearance.

The perpetrator of this appalling deed immediately as-

ceeded the steps. The shocked witness felt his blood curdling through his veins. His eye seemed doubly fixed on his retreating friend, and on the rippled surface of the water where the body sank. The American could not swim, or he would have suffered no hesitation in the course to be pursued. He was therefore obliged to gaze in motionless horror, and the safety of his friend kept him mute, for to call for assistance was to reveal the murderer! He felt himself, therefore, as it were, an involuntary accomplice in the deed; but it was no time for acute reflection. The figure of his friend was rapidly passing away; and as he turned from the fatal spot to follow him, he saw the water softly and silently closing over its hidden prey.

He quickly gained upon his friend, who, to his astonishment, took the direct road to the hotel. They arrived there at the same moment; and they recognised each other without exchanging a word. A simultaneous pressure of the hand was their only salutation; and the friend shuddered to feel, that the one he clasped was cold and clammy. The door opened to their summons, and they mounted together to their chamber.

CHAPTER III.

The mutual agitation of the young men kept them for some minutes silent. The desperate appearance of the unfortunate *lover*, if we still must so distinguish him, was quite dreadful to his friend: he looked like a man half drunk, half dead; the upper part of his face, his brow, and cheeks, were flushed; a flood of perspiration was on his forehead; and his eyes stared wildly, as if bodily pain was joined with mental agony. His lips were livid and contracted, and all around them, above and below, with his chin and jaws, were pallid, while in two or three places, broad marks of blood lay on, and changed the expression of, his countenance.

Seeing that his friend gazed at him with such an expression of terror, he started from his seat, rushed towards the looking-glass that hung above the mantle-piece, and con-

ral s convulsively springing back, uttered in a voice that thrilled man through his friend—

T "Oh, God! his blood is on my face, but not on my p *hands*. Look—look—they are unstained! Oh let me wipe out these frightful marks!" and, with frantic anxiety, he deluged his face with water, until he had successfully cleared the blood away.

"My friend, my friend! what does all this mean?" cried his agitated companion; "for Heaven's sake, relieve my anguish—what has happened to you—what fatal result?"

"Hush, hush!" replied the other; "give me a moment's time—you shall know all—every thing that I *may* tell. Sit down—I must begin regularly and as collectedly as I can."

He placed himself beside his friend, close to the fire, the blaze from which threw its lurid flash to mix with the wild and varied colouring of his face; and it gave to him altogether a look of more than human awfulness and horror.

"I left you, my friend, as the clock struck *nine*—that fatal and accursed hour, which sounded the knell of my happiness, and began the misery of my life!" It was in these words the unfortunate young man commenced his recital. He trembled as he spoke, and looked fearfully round the room; his friend caught the contagion, and listened with terrified attention as he continued.

"My blood was on fire; the wine I had drunk worked fiercely in my brain; and the novelty, the wildness, and the peril of the adventure, wound me up to a pitch of frenzied enthusiasm. I was fit for any thing—I only wanted a tempter—and there was one at hand!—I followed her, holding her robe in trembling agitation—she spoke not, nor did I. We walked through the cloisters of the church, cautiously, and on tip-toe; yet the echoes of our steps sounded through the vast building. It was utterly dark. I could scarce restrain myself from seizing my conductress in my arms—but the sacred place was soon violated! By winding stairs and narrow passages we passed through the precincts of the church, and reached the secret way to the convent cells. We entered *hers*—Oh, God! how that little space has become my world of recollection, of remorse, of horror!—We entered her cell. All was silent as death—the sisterhood slept, or perhaps performed *their* guilty orgies in secrecy like *us*.

"A little lamp glimmered before a crucifix and skull that

stood upon a table. Two coarse chairs completed the furniture—a bed stood in a recess, concealed by a dark curtain—God of Heaven, why was that curtain ever drawn!

"She instantly lighted two tapers and illuminated her deeply expressive countenance. Her eyes glowed like brilliants—that awful smile curled her lip—in short, she looked to me divine, more than woman!"

"My dearest friend," interrupted his companion, "you are unwell; restrain yourself for the present; you require repose—you speak with difficulty."

"No, no, 'tis nothing—let me go on—I am agitated, but no more—I will finish my detail. I cannot, if I would, repeat all that I spoke or she replied. The foolish ravings of a man half mad, or the confiding converse of a woman—of any woman—are not to be told! But should I keep faith with her?—What has she driven me to? The time flew past—she was divine—I, excited beyond manly endurance, pressed her to seal my happiness—she reminded me of my vow. I swore—how deeply, how blasphemously I swore!—that I was ready to do her bidding.

"'You are!' cried she: 'then drink to the safe end of your enterprise! The cell of a nun is not unfurnished for a lover's indulgence!' With these words she produced wine—I gulped down bumper after bumper, and I felt my head swim in a fiercer round than ever, and I clasped the nun in my arms. 'Hold!' cried she, 'not yet—you must first perform your task.'

"I am ready," replied I, "for aught you can require, or man accomplish—speak." Her looks here took a new expression—awful, and dark, and desperate!—'You will not fail?' she asked, and her words seemed to rattle in her throat—the look and the tone were in terrific unison. 'Put me to the test,' exclaimed I, in furious and impassioned agitation. 'Strain your nerves then to their boldest stretch—you have a dark and dismal task to do—nothing to excite your manly spirit—nought to stir up your young blood. *My* wrongs are already *avenged*—you have but to hide the victim and the deed in equal oblivion. Look here—firmly and boldly!' with these words she drew back the dark, coarse curtain of her bed.—Oh! what a thrill of agony shot through me as I gazed. The dead body of a priest, in his professional costume, lay stretched on the bed. His face pronounced him to be young.—Two or three wounds were gaping in his

breast and side—his features were distorted—his eyes wide staring—his mouth unclosed. I could not, for some moments, turn my looks away. I felt frozen to the spot. At length I looked at *her*. Her face was almost black with strained emotion. All the dark passions of the soul seemed struggling to give it the gloomiest and most hideous expression. I felt at the moment nothing but disgust and dread; for I confess it, I thought at the instant I stood by some fiend in human form.

"'Well,' said she, with demoniac imperiousness; 'now to fulfil your vow. Take that base body in your arms, bear it hence, and fling it into the first canal.'

"I thought I should have sunk on the floor; nothing could have been so hateful and revolting to me. Five minutes before I could have performed any thing. Murder itself would not have arrested my frantic passion. But now, all was changed, and chilled, and paralyzed; and this cold-blooded participation in the dreadful deed was beyond my power. I told her I *could* not do it. Why, oh, why must I remember what followed! I cannot repeat it—my oath, my honour are pledged—but, stronger still, her safety is at stake. Even *she* must not be endangered. Nothing that wears the female form but is sacred against man's betrayal! —Imagine all the rest, my friend—her overpowering blandishments—my maddening, infuriated delight! Oh, Heavens! close upon the scene—odious to myself, for ever let me hide myself.—The fiend, the fiend! what refinement in horrible guilt—that deeply, doubly polluted bed!—that damned cell! The dead man by our side!"

Exhausted and worn out, the young man sunk down, muttering impassioned and incoherent ravings like these. His friend by assiduous care, brought him to himself; and his reviving expressions were of deep anxiety lest he should have betrayed the secret of the nun. His friend assured him he had not, and he became tranquil, and began to continue his recital.

"I took the stiff and bloody body in my arms, and with a demon's strength, I flung it on my shoulders. She wrapped my cloak around *us*, and she led the way, and *we* descended —the lifeless head lay by my face, cheek to cheek, and the hands flapped against me as I walked. How had I power to bear it on?"

Just as he finished these words, he was seized with a sud-

den and violent fit of vomiting; his face became convulsed and blackened; and cold showers of sweat poured from his forehead. His eyes rolled, his lips quivered, and every sign of mortal agony was displayed in his whole form. He pressed his friend's hand, but could not speak a word. The latter, at once shocked and affrighted, called loudly for help; and at his summons, as it would appear, the room was in a moment filled with police officers, headed by two magistrates, with their satellite attendants—a long official train.

With true municipal indifference they began to examine and accuse the suffering object of their search and vengeance. Their authority for the intrusion was proudly demanded by the afflicted American, who laboured to assuage the agony of his friend. They replied, by producing a writing *in a female hand*, stating that "a murder had that morning been committed on the person of a young Dominican Father—the confessor of the convent, that the body was concealed, but would be that night between nine o'clock and twelve, flung into a canal, specifying its name, by the perpetrator of the crime." This paper was said to have been secretly conveyed to a police agent that evening, and that man was appointed to watch at the place and time mentioned—and he witnessed the truth of the denunciation, and tracked the *convicted* murderer. So spoke the legal authority! This man was instantly recognised by the American, as he who had figured in the day's proceedings. He remembered his pique against his hapless friend, and his smothered expressions of enmity. Could he be at the bottom of this affair, and leagued with the female fiend, that found an instrument to hide her guilt in his ardent and unsuspecting friend, and then laid a sure train, to let her secret and her new victim perish together!

But while this thought passed in his anxious mind, a deadlier and surer means of safety and secrecy on her part was fatally developed. The suffering culprit, as he now was deemed, every moment gave symptoms of increasing agony. He writhed in torture, and minute by minute lost every chance of life. His eyes closed, his hands dropped motionless, the coming signs of death pressed on him. The last words he uttered were, "The wine!—the wine!—poisoned!"—when a desperate spasm freed him from suffering and life.

The friend, stunned as if by some heavy blow, stood sta-

ture-like beside the corpse, holding one clammy hand, and gazing on the discoloured and distorted face. The municipal observers were shocked at the unlooked-for catastrophe, that snatched a victim from the laws. They soon, however, commenced to arrange their official reports of the strange transactions of that eventful day: and they gave little time to the surviving traveller, before they began their interrogatories, plainly warning him that he was implicated as being an accomplice in the murder, being distinguished on the spot where the body was plunged into the water, and seen to return to the hotel, with the unfortunate perpetrator of the deed.

This sounded really serious, and the American amidst his anguish had strength and clearness of mind sufficient to look upon his perilous position, and to see it in all its bearings. It was plain to him that matter enough existed (if the vengeful spirit of religion was aroused) to lead to his sacrifice; and, in all the difficulty of the trying scene, he summoned resolution and firmness sufficient to follow the best straightforward course on every occasion of life—to speak the truth wholly, and without reserve; and he detailed with great precision almost word for word as heretofore stated, the transactions of the day.

The singular relation startled and puzzled the hearers. They could not doubt the truth of the statement, for it bore in every word and every look of the American the stamp of implicit veracity. But though they privately and individually believed the shocking facts, it was decided that, publicly and collectively, they must not be even *tolerated*. So heavy a stroke at the sanctity of the town—the virtue of the pious sisterhood—the inviolability of the faith—the sacredness, and holiness, and infallibility of the Mother Church! Was such to be sounded abroad into the wide ears of the vulgar world? No, no! The dead priest was to be fished up from his watery grave, and quietly placed within an earthly tomb. His disappearance was to be wondered at; his murder hushed up; the nun, her actions, and her agents left in congenial gloom and doubt; and truth, poor truth, for a million of million of times, mercilessly doomed to be *smothered*, without remorse, and against all chances of resuscitation!

But to all this suppression of facts there was one objection. The deposition of the American was a sturdy docu-

ment; and he himself seemed a man who would speak out in defence of the reputation of his murdered friend; and he might cry for revenge against the supposed perpetrator of the deed? But the junta of authority thought, and rightly, that they could overcome this difficulty.

They accordingly, in the first place, represented to the young man his own personal danger, were he prosecuted on the evidence within their reach; next, they showed him the impossibility of his establishing the pretended facts of his recital, their only witness being no more; again, they assured him that his deceased friend's good name should suffer no attaint, as the whole of the circumstances being suppressed, all mention of him was at an end. They therefore proposed to him to quit the place at once—at the moment; leaving to them the care of the last Christian rites to the body, which could not rise up in reproaches against him for a forced abandonment.

The American, at first, revolted against the idea of leaving the last duties to be performed by strangers' hands. But he was strong-minded as well as good-hearted. He examined the case in every aspect, and he accepted the compromise thus offered. He left the town *alone*, in the dark, deep night, in desolate bewilderment of mind, and with a sad and sinking heart, but thereby securing the safety of his own life, and avoiding the scandal to his unfortunate companion's fame. Whither he turned his course I know not—nor could I trace the name of either.

Every one in the knowledge of these transactions was sworn to secrecy; and an inducement almost as strong held out in the threat of instant *destitution* to him who should violate the pledge. But (and how it happened must be decided by those who know,) the facts transpired—the recital became public—and, from one of the many mouths that were soon filled with it, it found its way to *my pen*; which, knowing no vow of secrecy, and having no place to lose, may stand acquitted of either impiety or imprudence in sending the story farther.

THE LIVING ALCHYMIST.

Will you believe antiquity?—records?
I'll show you a book where Moses, and his sister,
And Solomon, have written of the art;
Aye, and a treatise penned by Adam,
O' the philosopher's stone, and in High Dutch.
BEN JONSON.

IT will scarcely be credited that there still exists a man who believes in the wild visions of Alchymy—devotes his life to its pursuits, and conceives himself within the reach of the deepest of its long sought and long laughed-at mysteries. Yet such a mortal does exist—and it has been my good luck to see, converse with, and *appropriate* him. For he is mine, in fee—positive freehold, without quit-rent or crown-rent, tithe or tax; and I, like a generous proprietor, am about to show him to the world, as, perhaps, the very last specimen of a genus supposed to have been totally extinct.

Nothing could exceed my incredulity when I was informed of the existence of this man. I little thought that, in this age of knowledge and sunlight, a human moth could be found, singeing his wings in the taper of *such* a superstition. But my skepticism soon yielded to conviction; and that was accompanied by the pleasure I always feel from each new proof of those lingering illusions, the poetry of life, so fast dissolving before philosophy and *fact*.

The singular being in question is an inhabitant and a native of one of the cities of Belgium, where many scattered remnants are to be met with of those coarse webs, in which the speculative ardour of times past enveloped the purity of art and science. His existence came to my knowledge by mere accident. A circumstance of a strange and somewhat doubtful nature had caused a great deal of conversation and conjecture, just at the time that I happened to be sojourning in the town. A poor fellow had picked up, from a heap of

rubbish in one of the narrowest and most unfrequented streets, a piece of metal, weighing several pounds. He at first supposed it to be iron, as it was covered with a thick coat of rust. But even a piece of iron of that weight was no small prize; so he took it home, and began to scrape and scour it very industriously. After some labour he succeeded in getting off the thick crust; and after a little polishing, he began to perceive a yellowish tinge gleaming through the dark brown coat. The brazen serpent of the Hebrews was not probably gazed at with more devotion than this poor fellow gave to what he believed to be the solid lump of brass which his good fortune had thrown before him. He never imagined the possibility of its being *gold*—yet *gold* it was—and, after various consultations, and many an assaye, *gold* it was universally admitted to be.

The lucky possessor of this treasure having got over his astonishment and his joy, without running wild from their effects; and becoming extremely scrupulous, either through integrity or fear—their operations are very similar—resisted all the overtures of the jewellers and other Jews, and refused to sell his ingot at any price. He resolved on depositing it with the authorities of the town; and accordingly handed it over to the safe keeping of the chief magistrate, who immediately made an official report of the transaction to the Secretary of State for the Home Department. A very considerable deal of useless trouble was taken, in consequence of the minister's orders to find out the real owner of the mysterious ingot, or to trace the true history of its appearance in the public streets. Every effort was ineffectual—no claimant came forward—no evidence appeared—and after some delay, and the strictest investigation, the minister finally ordered the ingot to be returned to the finder, who, with much praise for his honesty, was pronounced to be the lawful proprietor; and this lucky, but no longer *poor* fellow, was dismissed to the enjoyment of his most unhoped for wealth.

For many weeks after this event the heads of the townspeople were almost turned, one way or another. Some looked upwards, some downwards, very many sideways—but few straightforward to their own business, the sure way, notwithstanding, of becoming as rich or richer than their fortunate fellow-citizen. Great numbers indulged in the belief that the golden age was fairly returned in solid evidence

upon earth. The most vapoury looked to the clouds in hopes of a Danaëan shower; and the least speculative part of the population (that is to say the poorest part of it, for covetousness always goes in a direct ratio with wealth) sifted and searched the most wretched heaps of rags and rubbish, on the chance of turning up "another, and another, and another."

At length, the most rational of the citizens came to the conclusion that this solitary ingot must have lain, time out of mind, concealed in some old house, and upon the demolition of the walls, or the clearing out of the cellars, have been carelessly flung into the street, to become a source of wealth to one man, and of words to thousands. But there were some, and not a few, who indulged another theory on the subject. These good folk—the credulous and marvel-loving—the romantic and rigmarole portion of the community, settled in their own minds, or *imaginations*—we must not confound terms—that "the living alchymist" was the author of all that had happened, that he had at length discovered—

> "The divine secret that doth fly in clouds
> From east to west, and whose tradition
> Is not from men, but spirits;"

and that the first fruits of his success was this identical ingot, thrown thus upon the wide world, like an apple of discord, or bone of contention, to set the population by the ears, and thus revenge himself for the contumely with which he and his studies had been heretofore treated. By this conflict of opinion, and the chance mentioned of the last cited, I, as any other stranger might, became acquainted with the name and residence of "the cunning man," who, I was assured,—

> "Could extract
> The souls of all things by his art; call all
> The virtues and the miracles of the sun
> Into a temp'rate furnace; and teach dull Nature
> What her own forces are!"

Fancy could not fail to be busy on the subject fresh started for its pursuit, in the very mention of a "living alchymist." No sooner did I bring myself to believe in the fact of the existence of one of these "smoky persecutors of Nature," and had ascertained that he was not an inmate of, or a sub-

ject for, a madhouse, than I began to picture him, in all the varieties of moral and physical construction—his enthusiasm, his abstraction, his ardent looks, his worn-out frame, pale cheeks and sunken eye, his picturesque costume, with all the auxiliaries of crucible, furnace, and alembic, and the chaos of elementary confusion associated with his wild pursuit. My mind seemed to fly back for centuries. It appeared to suffer a kind of retrograde transmigration, and to occupy the body of some contemporary of St. Leon; while the splendid combinations of Godwin peopled the actual scene with the very characters and customs, his breathing pictures of which had been the charm and the magic of my boyhood.

In breathless impatience I approached the alchymist's residence. I was truly and most unaffectedly excited to a state of high *romance*. I was well introduced, and sure of admittance, and a good reception. But the look of the house displeased and disappointed me. I had framed it to myself as Gothic, dark, and desolate. It was a square, modern mansion, plastered and white-washed, with a green door and brass knocker, in a well-built street, and provokingly clean. I hoped I had made a make a mistake; but the chubby-cheeked lass, who appeared at my knock, dissipated my doubts, and replied to my inquiry, in unquestionable Flemish, that her master was within—and just returned from market.

I gulped down this carnal and undignified intimation; and as I followed the *juffrow* along the narrow and white-washed corridor, I strove to keep awake my rather somnulent sensations of whilom excitement. But I had no time for preparation; for my conductor abruptly threw open the door of a back parlour—and the alchymist stood before me! I literally started back, and my heart sunk—with *what* species of emotion I shall leave to my readers' fancy, after I sketch the object thus suddenly revealed to my astonished observation.

He was a little, pot-bellied, smooth-faced, rosy-gilled, old fellow, with gray hair, tied behind in "a round unvarnished" pig-tail. He was dressed in a brown frock-coat, buttoned half-way up, and displaying a chintz waistcoat, a broad-frilled shirt, and a white muslin cravat, tied tight, and terminating under his chin in two large bows and flowing ends. I could not see his breeches, but his stockings were of white cotton

with blue stripes, and a huge pair of plated buckles fastened his broad-toed shoes. His face was a dumpling illustration of dulness, to which a simper and a chuckle of ineffable content added their mortifying evidence. I was utterly astounded. The whole fabric of my fancy was blown into the air. Antiquity, chivalry, and magic vanished from around me. Never were the wings of expectancy so closely clipped. The wide ocean of romance, on which I had been afloat, seemed shrunk into the dimensions of a dry dock; and I stood, as it were, with sails tight furled, in the steam-engine reality of boiler and black smoke.

I stared at my alchymist, with a gaze which nothing could have transmuted into politenesss. He returned it by a bow or two; and his little gray eyes twinkled stupidly; and he muttered some civilities in clumsy French. I made a bad return for these attentions, and gave but a sorry specimen of national good breeding. Quite satisfied, though by no means contented, I was about to make a rapid retreat; but my host (without whom, if I may be allowed the *équivoque*, I had so sadly reckoned) was not inclined that I should escape thus easily. His vanity was up in bottle—it had been many a long year fermenting; and was, as I soon found out, hereditary.

"Well, Sir," said he, "you were anxious to see a man whom every one considers a fool?"

"Why, Sir," stammered I, "I confess I was desirous to make the acquaintance of a gentleman whose pursuits are so uncommon—but—"

"Come, come, don't mince matters—you came here to laugh at me."

"Not with that *intention*, I assure you."

"Well, well, never mind—you need not deny it, if you did; you may laugh as much aa you like. Every one laughs at me—but I shall have the cream of the jest by and by—ha! ha! ha!"

"Why, do you really believe that you will ever discover the philosopher's stone?" asked I, my disappointment *fusing* down into amusement, at this vulgar caricature of alchymy and its sublime absurdities.

"That I shall *ever* discover it!" exclaimed he, with a contemptuous vibration of the upper lip, and a chuckle of self-consequence; and wheeling quickly round, and instantly walking out into a little trim-set flower-garden,

"Follow me!—look there!" added he, as soon as we reached the farther end of the *parterre*, and he pointed to half a dozen phials hanging against the wall in a corner, and covered by a glass case. "Look there; do you see that phial? *that* contains the philosopher's stone. The philosopher's stone indeed! *Ever* discover it! Why, it is nothing—nothing at all—the very first step."

"Indeed!" uttered I. "I confess my ignorance, but I thought the philosopher's stone was the grand secret. But where is it, pray? I see no stone."

"Heaven forbid that you should! No *stone!* why the *lapis philosophorum*, or philosopher's stone, is not a *stone*."

"What is it then, may I ask?"

"Why, it's a powder—that red powder that you see there, formed at the bottom of that liquid—that's the philosopher's stone—ha, ha, ha!"

"Then you expect next to be able to make gold?"

"Make gold! why I *can* make gold, and silver too; look at *that* phial—and *that*. What is in the first? Isn't it gold?—and in the other? Isn't it silver? Is there a goldsmith or chemist in the Netherlands that can deny it? But could they *make* it, ha, ha, ha!—not they, *not* they, not they!" and with these words he turned abruptly round—a favourite movement of his.

"My good Sir," cried I, catching him at his rebound, as I may say, "you quite astonish me."

"I dare say I do, ha, ha, ha!"

"You do indeed. What! you possess the philosopher's stone—you can make silver and gold—you have the proofs there in those phials?" and I looked at the dirty white, and the green and yellowish compounds.

"Well, and what of that? I tell you the philosopher's stone is *nothing*—and my gold and silver is not worth a brass farthing."

"How—what—why? I don't understand you."

"Why, because my gold is not solid—it wouldn't stand *fusion*—it would evaporate and fly up the chimney; and that red powder, the *lapis philosophorum* can't make better. It is the *transmuting* powder I want. Do you understand that? Not the powder that can only make such pitiful gold as this—although it is the *purest* that can be made of its kind, and many a man would think half a century of toil well repaid by being able to make it; but I want the powder that can

change base metals *into* gold—that's what I want; and what, with the blessing of Heaven, I am in a fair way of having."

"And that grand result may happen at any moment?"

"Ay, at the very moment we are talking of it, the purchase of the globe and eternal life may be mine—ha, ha, ha!"

"You must work hard for all this, Sir," said I; "I should like to see your laboratory."

"See my laboratory! you do see it. There it is—this is it," said he, pointing to the corner where hung the phials; and opening out his hands, to express, as I thought, that he worked in the open air, but he undeceived me immediately, continuing—

"Work hard! I don't work *at all*—ha, ha, ha!" and once more he wheeled briskly round on his own pivot.

"Who works *for* you, then?" asked I.

"Nature—the climate—the Heaven—the sun and moon—the seven planets—*they* are my workmen."

"And do you really think they understand their trade?" said I, smiling.

"Understand their trade! *Pardi!* to be sure they do. What makes these flowers to grow in the earth? these trees to put forth their shoots and blossoms? cannot the power and the agents that do that, make gold and silver generate in these phials?"

To this unanswerable argument I felt no inclination to reply.

"Does it take a long time," asked I, "to form this powder into gold?"

"Seven months—a month for each planet."

"But although you have not arrived at the grand secret, you know how to go about it? you know the matters requisite?"

"Yes, I think I do, ha, ha, ha! The four elements—any fool may know that. But how to put them together! there's the point, ha, ha, ha!" and round he spun once more.

"You must have burned a good deal of charcoal in this pursuit," said I, laughing outright.

"Not a single bit," replied he, with his usual chuckle; "but my father burned about four thousand bushels of it."

"Did your father follow the same trade?"

"Ay, for sixty years. He beggared himself by it, and was at last blown up by the explosion of a retort. But he

knew nothing—he was a mere child—he went on the wrong tract—he worked with *fire*, and left behind him a heap of ashes, that could as soon make mutton as gold. My ancestors have spent centuries in the science."

"Your family is an ancient one?"

"I believe it is indeed, ha, ha, ha! Follow me," and round he whisked, and walked straight into the house. I followed as desired, and stopped when he stopped, before a huge genealogical *ocean*, hung up against the wall of the corridor. It was bedaubed in all the corners with coats of arms, heraldic bearings, and hieroglyphical devices, and looked dirty enough to have been drawn in the dark ages.

"Stand upon that table," said he, "and just look at the *first*, the topmost name, close to the ceiling. Stay, stop a minute—put this chair upon the table—now up with you—look sharp, and tell me if mine is an ancient family. I should like to know your opinion, ha, ha, ha!" and he thus ran on, murmuring rather to himself than to me, while I mounted the very ricketty pedestal, and was somewhat repaid for the trouble and risk, by a new proof of human littleness, in reading, in old misshapen characters, the name "Augustus Cæsar." I descended, and saw the twinkle of pedigree-pride in the old man's eye, and the nervous curl that shook his lip. I made him the very low bow which he seemed to expect, and I heartily wished at the moment that he possessed the essence of philosophy rather than the *stone*.

"Your favourite study must have cost you years of reading," said I, looking at the dusty shelves, which were bent down with heaps of old books, in most unsightly bindings, and many of them in "High Dutch," which the readers of my motto already know to have been Adam's language.

"Yes, yes, it has required some application," replied the Alchymist, "but I might have read for ever, in the way my ancestors did, and, like them, not have been a bit the wiser. All these volumes, and thousands more, have been written on the hermetic science; but the whole secret might be traced on a paper, the size of your thumb nail—what do you think of that?"

"In fact, it lies in a nut-shell?" said I.

"Yes, but who can *crack* the shell, ha, ha, ha?" chuckled he; "ay, you might read to eternity, and not understand one single sentence without you possessed the key."

"And pray how is that to be procured?"

"The way I procured it—the way the whole race of philosophers who have known the secret procured it—the way any man *may* procure it, but in which no other perhaps ever will procure it—the way by which religion enters the heart—the way the prophets procured their power—the way in which God speaks to his creatures, and in which man may know his Creator—by *inspiration!*"

"Enough, enough, Sir!" exclaimed I, "spare yourself and me any further explanation: I now understand the nature and value of your science completely. I thank you cordially for your frankness—I wish you all happiness and superhuman success; for you have taught me a new lesson in the wide book of nature, and I will do my best to profit by it. Good morning to you, Sir.—Farewell!"

With these words, and a reciprocal profusion of bowings and scrapings, we made our way, he forwards, and I backwards, to the street door, which he insisted on opening, and I made a point of closing; glad to shut, within the atmosphere of his own absurdity, a visionary unfit for the rational intercourse of life.

But the reader will, perhaps, be surprised to hear that this visit made a strong impression upon me. I cannot reasonably account for such an effect, produced by so contemptible a cause, for nothing could have been more effectually destructive of every imaginative illusion, connected with the wild secrets of Alchymy, and all their exciting associations. Yet I could no more restrain, than reason with the feeling that made me dwell on the insipid enthusiast—if I *must* profane the appellation by giving it to him—and on the pursuit over which *his* devotion threw so degraded a stain. So it was, however, and I am almost ashamed to confess that I followed an idle impulse, which led me for several days, to look out in the old libraries of Belgium, for works that treat of the Hermetic Philosophy.

I lost some precious time in wading through a mass of authorship, that gave me but little entertainment, and still less instruction, but which, nevertheless, *led me on.* I worked like a machine to which the impetus was given, no matter how or by whom. But I shall not repine if, by my testimony to the utter worthlessness of the study, even as an amusement, I may prevent others from a like infatuation. The *most* inquisitive may be satisfied to remain in ignorance of the divine art or *science*—for its profoundest professors

do not know which to designate it—and may leave in the dusty repose of some mouldering collection, the whole of the writers, from Hermes Trismegistus, the Egyptian, down to the Abbé Lenglet du Fresnoy.

It would be of little comfort to the curious to know (as I do) whether the double mercury of Trevisan, or the mixture of mercury with gold of Basil Valentine, was the material most approved of, to waste the time and wear out the wits of the phantom followers. I am sure no one would thank me for communicating the knowledge, so dearly earned, and so soon to be forgotten, as to the relative merits of essences, bodies, metals, alkalis, and vegetables, for the chances of forming the real projecting powder or *lapis philosophorum*, or for detailing the disputes of Father Kircher with about a dozen of the "philosophers," in which the renowned Jesuit proved himself a perfect ass, by thinking it necessary to *prove* that his adversaries were the same.

Who, either, would desire a detail of the experiments of Arnoldus de Villanova at Rome, in the thirteenth century; of Raymond Lully in England, in the fourteenth; of Gustenhover of Strasbourg, and Dubois in France, somewhat later?—or be interested in the facts of Louis XIII. Gustavus Adolphus, and John, Prince of Mirandola, having countenanced this humbug, or, as some say, believed in it; or of its being sadly goaded by, and tossed upon, the horns of Pope John the XXIId's most violent Bull?

All the stores of information I have procured on these heads may be very quietly bonded and warehoused, as food too nauseous and unpalatable for even the craving appetite of the present generation. But I cannot resist giving one extract (as a fair specimen of all that has been written on the subject) from a work, that, in the estimation of the initiated, hangs on the very topmost branch of the tree of knowledge. It bears the modest title of "The Sum of perfection," and owns for its author a most renowned Arabian philosopher and alchymist called Geber, who, some centuries back, received the *inspiration*, and discovered the grand secret. The passage which I am about to transcribe, may have lost some of its spirit in a double translation, but I dare say *the sense* is pretty well preserved. It is the last chapter of "The Sum of Perfection," and I only regret that I did not begin to read the book Chinese-ways—for if I had, *my* readers may believe, I would not have gone *further*.

"CHAPTER THE LAST.

"Of the manner in which the author has taught the art.

"To remove all sort of pretext on which my calumniators could accuse me of duplicity, or of not having spoken with full frankness in this treatise, I do declare, in the first place, that I have not attempted to teach the *science* consecutively or with studied form, but have dispersed my instructions here and there, in divers chapters of the work. And I did this *on purpose*, because had I put them in a regular way, and one after another, the wicked (who would have made a bad use of their knowledge) would have learned quite as easily as the well disposed; *easier*, perhaps, as the devil would have no doubt prompted his children.*

"I declare, in the second place, that in every part of this treatise where it appears that I have spoken the plainest and the most openly of the science, it is just there that I have spoken the most obscurely. I have not, notwithstanding, spoken any where by allegories or enigmas; but I have treated my subject in plain and intelligible language, having written with sincerity, and in the way I was taught by inspiration of God, the most mighty, most glorious, and above all praise, who deigned to reveal it to me; it being he alone that can give it, and take it back, to whom and when he pleases.

"Hold up, then, Children of Science! Do not despair of obtaining the power to learn this marvellous secret! For I promise you faithfully that you will infallibly discover it, if you seek it, not by the aid of reason, or of any other science, but by ardour and impetuosity of mind!

"Whoever will seek it by the natural intelligence and enlightenment of his understanding, he shall find it. But he who would expect to learn it in books need not hope to acquire it without long study. For I protest that neither the philosophers who have preceded me, nor I myself, have written one sentence but for our own information, and that of the philosophers and adepts who shall succeed us, and not *in the least* for others.

"As for myself, although I have written in the self same way, I can nevertheless say that I have not said what I have

* *Si plura dicerem etiam pueri intelligerent*—if more were said, even children might understand it—was a favourite phrase of the "Philosophers."

said merely to excite the shrewd and sensible to study this sublime science, but that I have said quite enough to give them the means of seeking the secret by the only true method. Moreover, I can pledge myself that whoever will apply diligently, and with good heart, to understand what I have said in this book, will assuredly have the pleasure of discovering a very great gift at the hands of the Most High.

"And that is all I have to say, touching the study of an *art*, or a *science*, so renowned and very excellent."

The reader will no doubt be struck with some passages in this mass of jargon, resembling a higher order of jugglery; but *this* is enough to deal with at present.

Like the Indian sage, who reduced the library of the king his master, from a hundred camel loads of books into *four sentences;* or a cook, who boils down a basket of spinage into a saucerful; I have stewed all my Alchymical information into this—that "the sublime science," was, at its best, but a study fitting a mere bubble, to burst at the first prick of common sense, whose worthiest motto, *intellige si potes*, best designates its meaning—a game of "catch me who can!"

Yet, reader, recollect that there lives one man who firmly believes in *all*, and he is within the reach of any one who will take the trouble to *find* him.

THE

TRAPPISTS OF CATSBERG.

On the very borders of France and Belgium, and so completely "debateable," that the inhabitants scarcely know to which nation they belong, there is a cluster of hills, which, in that flat country, are considered as mountains of no ordinary importance. There are six or seven of them, each a few hundred feet high, and differing so little in that particular, and in their general features, that it is evident that Mother Earth threw them from her at one birth.

After crossing the western division of Belgium, from north to south, without seeing any spot of land higher than a mole hill; travelling over a portion of Nature's face, so smooth that one longs for a wart or two, as beauty-spots rather than disfigurements—it is delightful to catch the swelling aspect of these frontier hills, and to mark something rising between you and the heretofore unbroken circle of the horizon.

I never saw a *mountain*, or indeed a hill of almost any height, that I did not feel an inclination to climb it. The group of elevations now before me could not fail strongly to excite this propensity, if it were merely from their contrast with the monotonous insipidity I had left behind me. But they are in themselves extremely picturesque, well wooded, and broken into abrupt varieties of landscape. They appeared most tempting; but I never was less able to gratify my own wish, or explore their beauties. From circumstances of no importance to the reader, but of infinite moment to the writer—so passing is the intercourse between *intimates* of three volumes' standing—I was at the time little master of my limbs. They took advantage of a long illness to shake

off my authority, and refused to obey *me*, although quite unable to shift for themselves. The consequence was, that I was, for exercise' sake, obliged to have recourse to those machines formerly described, the village cabriolets; and at the time I speak of, I was seated in the right-hand corner of one of the very worst of them, the driver occupying, according to custom, the left. But this was a very different sort of personage from those of the same profession, of whom I have previously given a sketch. It was no other in fact than the old woman, the proprietor of the vehicle, who, while her regular charioteer was shivering in a fit of the low country fever, took this office upon herself; and after first driving a hard bargain with me for the price, (to get her hand in practice,) she scrambled up by the wheel, and settled herself beside me, and off we jolted for a couple of leagues, I did not care in what direction; but chance led us towards the *mountains*.

There never was a more unsociable couple than we were for the first league. No communication of any kind intruded on the vacancy which separated us, for I kept myself so remote as to give full elbow room to her whip hand. But, notwithstanding the space, not a word, even, passed between us; exchange, in that particular, was much below par. She was, in fact, repulsive to the last degree—an evident skinflint, without one element of good fellowship, with that nutcracker countenance which bespeaks asperity, and a look so sour that it would have been worth a wagon load of vinegar to Hannibal, when he cut his way through the Alps. She was so taciturn as not even to mutter a sound to her old gray mare, that shook its scanty tail at her sometimes—reproachfully, I thought.

We had thus silently and unsociably proceeded, until we came to the very base of the hills, which gradually displayed their secret recesses as we approached. A little village was visible, about a quarter of a league before us, close to the foot of one of them; and, as the road began to slope gently upwards, the paces of the old gray mare were successively changed, from a trot to an amble, and from an amble to a walk. The old gray woman, consequently, first loosened her loose hold, then placed her whip in the corner beside her, next threw the reins on the animal's neck, and finally flung herself back in the carriage, took a pinch of snuff, offered me another, and began to talk.

"Aha!—good—so far, so well! now we may take it easily. Go along, my lass, at your own pace; your legs and my arms may rest themselves; and well they require it, after near two leagues driving at such a rate."

So much of her conversation was addressed to herself and her mare. She paused for a while, then pulled from her pocket a long clasp knife, and took up from the straw at the bottom of the vehicle an old pocket-handkerchief, which contained a feed of oats and beans ready mixed. Safely shrined within the corn, and wrapped in a fold of dirty paper, were some thick slices of brown bread and butter, and several layers of cold fat pork; forming altogether a display of sandwiches most solidly disgusting. As my companion offered me one of these, her rigid features relaxed into a smile, which was a mixture of sweet and acid, as nauseous as a cough emulsion. I declined the proffered dainties, and saw her, without the least degree of envy, mumble through the greater part of the repast, and wash it down with a dose of beer, from a broad-bottomed bottle which lay in the cabriolet pocket. These stimulants of solid and fluid produced a powerful effect on my companion, for she became all at once as loquacious as she had been taciturn; and her conversation turned, luckily for my wishes, on the objects which began so much to excite my attention.

"Well, Sir, here we are among the mountains, and a hard pull my poor beast will have of it, to get as far as the village yonder. I don't know what demon made me take this road, instead of going straight along the level causeway. But here we are—there 's no use in repining; and we shall have down-hill work going back. So cheer up, Sir; I promise you a draught of new milk, some fresh bread and butter at the village, a repast which some folks may prefer to cold pork and bottled beer. To your better health, Mynheer!" and she quaffed the dregs of her bottle of froth.

"Do you know the names of these hills?" asked I.

"To be sure I do. It would be odd if I didn't know the hills, where I lived so long, and where my poor husband immortalized himself."

"A hero, by Jupiter!" thought I, and I listened in fixed attention.

"Yes, I do indeed know them, continued the dame, "and so shall you if you wish it. There, right before us, is Rosenberg, so called from the bloody murders that stained its

soil deep red, after the battle of Cassel, a thousand years ago, between the men of Bruges and Julius Cæsar, or the Duke of Alva, I don't know which, but my poor man could have told you all about it, as it 's often he told me, lone woman that I am. There 's Scarpenberg, high, and stiff, and rocky, like its name; and Zwartenberg, as black as the devil himself, that used to sit on the top of it in former times, and watch the hermits rooting their caves in the earth, long before the Benedictine monastery was pulled down, and the villain monks massacred by the people, with my own good man, Peter Zannekills, for their leader—for which good deed, Heaven rest his soul—Amen! Then here, close to us, is Catsberg—"

"By your leave, dame," said I, "before you go any farther, pray tell me the particular causes that led to the deed you mention."

"You must not have much knowledge, if you are yet to learn one of the most gallant acts of history," replied she, with a vivacity that set every muscle of her face in action, and a curl of contempt on lip and nostril, which gave a most unsightly twist to her gray mustachios. "Yes," continued she, "I believe every one knows that the Benedictines who last roosted in the old convent on Swartzenberg, were killed to a man, and their sinful nest pulled about their ears, every stone of it; as you may see, from the foundation ruins lying bare there before you, down to the very cellar floors, where their miserable victims were entrapped."

Confessing my ignorance of all this, with a most appeasing humility, and showing no disposition to doubt her statements of geology or chronology, the old woman proceeded to a somewhat lengthy detail of the atrocities vulgarly attributed to the Benedictine confraternity. Among others, the popular belief has stamped their memory with that of inveigling all the pretty females of the neighbourhood to a certain part of the monastery, where a trap-door immediately opened under their feet, and they were safely precipitated, I forget how many fathoms deep, into caverns where every luxury but fresh air and daylight was provided by the lascivious monks. There the hapless victims were doomed to linger, till premature decay withered their youthful bloom, when they were successively put to death by the impious priests, to whose brutal embraces they had been doomed. The fruits of their intercourse were instantly destroyed; for no sooner had each

miserable mother given birth to a child, than it was torn from her arms, and she was thus robbed of all that lighted the cavern solitude with a ray of hope. The whole country was thus kept for some years in a state of ferment, and to use the words of my informant, "a pretty woman became as scarce an animal on the skirts of Swartzenberg, as a wild cat in the woods of Catsberg, ever since Paul Scoonen, the hunter, was employed to destroy them at five guilders a score."

At length a most tragical catastrophe put an end to the career of monkish villainy. One of the victims (a married woman) escaped by some miracle which I could scarcely comprehend. She fled at night to her own cottage door, and almost frightened her husband to death by her unexpected appearance, her ghastly looks, and altered form. She briefly recounted the story of her captivity and sufferings; told how she was led along by a prowling priest, at the close of the evening, when she had wandered rather far from home in search of a goat that straggled from its pasture; how the reverend father coaxed her on into the convent bounds, and finally to the room from which she was suddenly plunged down into the abyss; how her two babes, born in these dungeons, never saw the light, being unmercifully strangled by their *very* reverend fathers; and how, after a captivity of nearly three years, she eluded their vigilance and escaped.

"How happy the man must have been in recovering his wife!" exclaimed I, in my innocence.

"That he might well be!" replied she, with a self-sufficient toss of her old head.

"And what did the husband do?" asked I.

"Why, he kissed his pretty wife, God bless him! gave thanks to Heaven, stuck a knife in his leathern belt, took his bill-hook in one hand, and a blazing fagot in the other; then roused the neighbourhood, and was the first to set the monastery in flames, and commenced the butchery by cutting the prior's throat!"

"But you forget, my good dame, having told me that your own husband took the lead in this pious business."

"And who dares deny it? Was not Peter Zannekills my husband?—and didn't I go with him hand in hand, and stand by him to the last till the whole pile fell in, and buried the very memory of the villain that ruined me?"

"What, then, were *you* the pretty woman in question?—*you* the wife that the man thanked heaven for sending back to him?"

"Yes, Mynheer, I was; and for thirty years afterward he had the blessing of a faithful helpmate to repay him for his three years of divorce; and he only parted from me, on his death-bed, in the hope that I might—"

"Live many a long day after him?"

"Exactly so, Mynheer."

"What a shocking sight the burning ruins and the murdered priests must have presented!" exclaimed I.

"Yes, they did; but a sight that did one good! It was fine to see lust and cruelty weltering in blood and flame! But it was a sad spectacle, indeed, to watch the ghastly women as they fled from the caverns half wild with fright and joy, and fainting from the fresh air rushing upon them too suddenly! But never mind looking back to these dead monks, while you have plenty of living Trappists to stare at here on Catsberg. Heaven preserve me! if there isn't one of them close by!—*two*, as I am a sinner! Let us get on from this lonely place—I would not trust myself within reach of them for the world!"

While she whipped the old mare into something approaching an amble once more, I could not resist a smile at her anxiety, which might have suited with the circumstances of forty years before; and taking for granted her reports of her former charms, I gave a passing thought to the fragile nature of personal beauty, and wondered if any youthful fair one could see the anticipated reflection of her loveliness in the face of this old crone, or value her own bloom the less, from the prospect of what it might become.

In the mean time, I kept a strict eye on the two trappists; and curiosity absorbed reflection, speculation, and philosophy. The faces of these men were turned from the road, as they were employed watching three or four cows that grazed in a pasture on the hill side. The figures were enveloped in brown cassocks, with cowls pulled over each head; and nothing more was visible but two sturdy and naked pair of legs, as they strode through the furze and heath. I perceived that they wore shoes, but no other object of dress was visible. I could not ascertain whether or not they had discovered our approach; but they seemed to turn their backs most scornfully either on us or the world.

We soon reached the little village, which was one of those neatly built, sequestered spots, that seem made for the enjoyment of what is most amiable as well as most humble in life. There were but two or three houses that exceeded one story in height, and these had no pretensions over the others but in a few feet elevation. A pretty girl received us at the inn, more blooming than the large tulip (a favourite sign in the Netherlands) which was painted over the door. A limping hostler hobbled out to assist my old woman in *unroping* the mare; while the girl, (whose name might have been Hebe) handed me a glass of delicious new milk, which her smiles seemed to convert into that of "human kindness" itself. Seated on the stone bench, in front of the house, I finished my draught, and eat with it a roll of the very best bread I ever tasted, in Belgium or out of it, and butter that merited as pretty an imprint as the pretty face of her who had made it. While I was thus employed, the old mare munched her mixture in the portable manger which stood at the door; and the old woman despatched the remnant of her sandwiches with a rapidity that proved her teeth to have bid defiance to time.

I looked upon the hill which rose high above the village, and distinguished its barren sides, through the veil of smoke wreathing upwards in the light breeze that had scarcely power enough to stir a leaf or a blade of grass. On the brow of the hill some straggling cottages appeared, and beyond them, on the very summit, stood (as I was told) the monastery of the Trappists.

Rousing all my strength of resolution and *muscle*, and grasping firmly my trusty stick, which had ere then aided me up acclivities somewhat higher than that I now comtemplated, I proposed to a gaping youth, who seemed to have nothing better to do, to guide me by the easiest path to the high point of my ambition, and the very highest, I believe, of his knowledge. A piece of ten cents sealed our bargain; and I set out, vigorously leaning on the lad, and followed by many cautions from my old woman, "to take care of myself, and look out sharply for trap-doors."

I never felt more thoroughly the inspiring influence of air and exercise. At every upward step, I seemed to throw a load of fatigue and languor down the hill. My limbs became elastic, my spirits light, and I felt stronger and younger than I had been for months before. I now and

then paused for repose; but by the time I reached the top, I only halted for the purpose of enjoying the view: and it was really worth enjoying. A wide extent of landscape spread around, but it seemed secluded and *domestic*. The two or three towns in sight did not look as if they were gone a visiting, like those seen in the mist from loftier eminences; but gave a notion of home and quietness, calm enjoyments, and social circles. The prospect was bounded, at a reasonable extent, by rising grounds and woods; and the highest object was Mount Cassel, standing in single pride, and looking far over the heads of all the other elevations in my view. I could not help giving this hill somewhat more than its due share of veneration, as I marked its pre-eminence; and I thought that men might take example from mountains, and understand the value of standing *alone*. The group around me are lost in a common confusion to the gazer from Mount Cassel, merely because they *are* a group. Had each stood singly out from its fellows, in originality and independence, each might have gained its separate share of admiration, and have attracted in its turn the very same degree of respect that I now gave to another, no higher nor better than they.

"There, Sir, is the monastery," said my guide, as soon as he caught my eye turned in the proper direction.

"The monastery!" exclaimed I, in surprise, at seeing, instead of the gloomy building one associates with the name, a modern house, white-washed and cheerful-looking, stretching along the extent of a handsome garden, smiling in sunshine, and the absolute contrast to aught morose, or dull. Looking over a hedge, which was the only enclosure to an extensive yard in the rear of the house, I observed close to it two of the trappists, industriously working with carpenter's tools. A little farther off, two or three more were busily employed in spreading out some newly washed linen; others moved about, variously occupied, and all wore the same coarse and characteristic costume as those I had first encountered. Some of the fellows I now gazed at were of most ferocious aspect, with bushy beards and scowling brows; and I thought I was coming into contact with felony's picked men.

I moved round the garden hedge, and reached a small door at the other side, which my guide informed me was the entrance to the place. I accordingly rang the bell. The

door was immediately opened; and a figure stood before me, of an aspect totally different from those I had previously seen. It was that of a young man, beardless almost, of fair and mild complexion and demeanour, dressed in a robe of white drugget, his cowl thrown back, and discovering a head with hair so closely cut as to appear as if recently shaved, all but a circular rim of about half an inch broad just above the ears, which struck me as an impious imitation of the halo usually represented in painting close above the h ads of saints.

The young man made me a low obeisance, with arms crossed on his breast, and he demanded, in Flemish, what was the object of my visit? I replied, in French, that I wished to see an establishment so interesting, and hoped I might be permitted to indulge my curiosity. He bowed assent, and led the way to the house. I followed, the guide at my heels, cap in hand, and looking awfully respectful to every thing we approached.

We first entered a small square parlour on the ground floor, of which a few common articles composed the furniniture; but all were extremely neat, and I found one of the rush-bottomed, cherry-backed chairs as luxurious a resting-place as a couch of velvet, had I been visiting a palace: such is the advantage of *things* being in keeping with *places*.

The chamberlain left me for a few minutes, most probably to "report progress" to his superior, for the prior himself soon made his appearance. He was an extremely good-looking man of about forty, dressed like those I had first observed, with the exception of his head being covered by a close leather cap, and the brown cloth of his robe being of a texture not so coarse. After a short conversation, I proceeded, under the direction of the reverend ciceroné, who waited outside, to examine the remainder of the house, beginning with the little chapel, which was very plain, having none of the disagreeable pomp of Catholic churches in general. We next walked through the narrow corridors, on each side of which were ranged the little cellular divisions, where the monks went through the mockery of repose; for there can be little of its comfortable reality in the four hours' rest snatched between eight o'clock and midnight, when they rise again to pray and chant, without changing an article of their clothing from morning till night, or night till

morning. Their very shirts of coarse horse-hair, are worn for a fortnight together. The beds on which they lie down are most ingeniously uncomfortable, being too short for even a common-sized man, and I have no doubt but their possessors often wish for a couch of the Procrustes fashion, with *one-half* the capabilities of his celebrated machine. A scanty rug covers the straw on which these self-tormentors stretch themselves; and no other furniture of any kind adorns their cells, the dimensions of which do not exceed six feet square. A small aperture is cut in each door, to admit a literal *mouthful* of air, and on each is inscribed the name of its occupant, "Brother Francis," "Brother Ambrose," "Brother Symphorien," "Brother Placidus," and so on.

We next visited the refectory, where a table was laid for about forty. Beside each plate, of the coarsest earthen ware, was a mug of the same material, about the size of a small drinking-glass. These were filled with beer; a scanty bit of brown bread was beside each plate; and a still smaller portion of cheese; and I found that these, with an undressed salad and a soup made of water, onions, potatoes, and parsley, composed the entire repast. But it must be observed, that at the period of my visit the Trappists were living *well*. They had bread and milk for breakfast, besides the dinner luxuries which I have enumerated; but they never eat meat, poultry, or even fish. On the first of October their Lent of *nine months* was to commence; and during the whole of that time they allow themselves but one meal a day, excluding totally the indulgences of milk and beer, and wholly living (if it can be called so) on vegetables, bread, and water. In every room the word "SILENCE" was painted on the wall, and I figured to myself these unsocial Cenobites, placed at their lonely board, and, in the coarse, though scanty indulgence of appetite, discarding these convivial accessories which raise eating men above grazing brutes. But the whole system of Trappism goes to degrade mankind to its lowest possible level. Beggary, needless filth of person, perpetual silence, (except to the few who must use their tongues to keep their commerce open with the world) seem the fundamental principles of the order. They herd together for no conceivable purpose that might not be effected by each man singly, and by thus congregating they

give a scope to imagination, or malignity, for odious imputations, which after all may have no reality in them.

Yet I could not help viewing these monks with a species of compassion that approached to what might be called interest. Whatever may have been the excesses of bigotry or crime that have forced these men into such an asylum, the life they lead is indisputably one of wretchedness. Whatever their sins, the penance is equivalent. For what misery can exceed that of the closest intercourse, without the least *society*, with one's fellow-men; the mind condemned to wallow in the mire of its own dark thoughts, with constant yearnings to unburthen itself; a companion, perhaps for years, at the very elbow of each wretch, only wanting the interchange of *one word* to become intimate, confiding, and compassionate—and that word forbidden; to move about, each man a breathing automaton, heart, feelings, and faculties, all under interdict? I say nothing of their personal austerities—but let me be of any order save that of La Trappe—fasting and praying, as long as nature and the brain can be kept on the stretch, flagellated daily, hourly, if the vows demand it, so as thought is free to vent itself in speech, so as the healing intercourse of friendship be allowed, even at the risk of confidence leading to disappointment! The best fate that awaits the Trappist is, that he cannot live long, and that the intellect is worn out, ere the body sinks under the wasting sufferings to which it is doomed.

Wishing to examine the details of the place more closely than this hasty morning visit allowed, I readily accepted the invitation of the prior to spend a day or two in the monastery, a custom prescribed towards all strangers, a law of hospitality that is sure to meet its recompense. I accordingly sent back my garçon guide, with a message to my old woman, that she might return alone, sending me, the following morning, a change of those articles of dress, which even the example of my hosts could not induce me to dispense with.

I was soon served, in the little square parlour, with a very good dinner of flesh and fowls, cheese, eggs, beer, wine, and all that was calculatad at once to satisfy and astonish the traveller. I only wondered what became of the *remains*, or how the supply of the larder was disposed of, when no claimant like myself consumed its resources. I, however, asked no such questions. I slept in a neat bed, with tolera-

bly fine linen, and in a chamber altogether such as might content any reasonable visiter.

During the day, I walked about the garden and on the hill, conversing with the prior, and also with the almoner, who indulged most freely in his privilege of speech. He was a young fellow under five-and-twenty, good-looking, loquacious, jovial; and he seemed well qualified for his office of managing the household affairs, and seeking abroad for resources which he aided to consume at home. The offices of almoner and begging brother are united, and are by no means sinecures, as I was afterward convinced.

I attended the afternoon service in the chapel, and saw a remarkable display of close-cropped heads, apparent humility, and the externals of devotion. There were many commonplace, and *some* marked countenances among the monks who chanted the service; and these were uniformly habited in a white robe, with a black stripe down the back; the heads close trimmed, with the exception of the circle I before described. They were almost all young men, and evidently of an order superior to the coarse and brown-clad brethren who worked at the menial offices. In what form of gregarious intercourse can perfect equality exist, since there is, even among Trappists, a privileged class? But it is, after all, questionable which is the aristocracy here—whether the psalmodist, who performs no manual labour, has not a still harder task, in a seven hours' daily attendance in the chapel, aiding the hoarse discords of his brother chorists. Among the latter I was particularly struck with the positive air of consumptive delicacy in their faces and hands, and the remarkable developement, in many of the heads, of that elevation which phrenologists pronounce to be the organ of *veneration*. There was not a prominent forehead among them. There were a very old man and a young one, who were fit figures for sculptor or painter—the young man, particularly, was one of the finest expressions of resigned and pious beauty that I ever contemplated; and I have him before me as I write, in his fixed posture, with folded arms, and eyes neither cast upwards nor downwards, in assumed devotion or false piety, and the hectic flushings that passed at times across his pale and sunken cheek.

During my visit, I acquired a good deal of information as to the habits and rules of this remarkable order, and I was disabused of some errors which I had formerly entertained;

among others were the vulgar notion, that the Trappists never change any article of dress till it literally rots on the back; and that a part of their daily duty is, to go through the ceremony of digging their own graves. Cause enough exists, without having recourse to such exaggerations, to make the system of La Trappe eminently objectionable to those whose principles are opposed to monachism in all its branches. A few of the peculiar rules of this order have been mentioned. The most obviously repulsive to good sense, which it possesses in common with others, is that of being wholly subsisted by beggary; for any little appearance of industry among its votaries is confined to offices of household necessity, which they certainly would not perform could they find any others fools enough to save them the trouble. A few words on the subject of monkish mendicity may not be amiss here.

Of nearly one hundred monastic orders in the church of Rome, upwards of thirty live by charity; "without any obligation," as they say, "to work, either corporeally or spiritually, for their own support. For participating the sovereignty of God in the empire of the universe, they have the right to live at the public cost, without doing any thing but what they please."*

It is, however, clear that St. Francis, the author of the begging system, had no intention that it should reach the state of corruption it soon acquired. His principle is thus laid down: "Those brothers to whom God has given the ability to do it, will labour faithfully, so as to avoid idleness, without injuring the spirit of prayer; and as a recompense, their bodily wants will be relieved; they and their brethren joining humility to poverty: but *they must not take money.* The brethren must have nothing of their own, neither house, land, nor other possessions; but considering themselves as strangers in this world, they will go on with confidence, asking charity."

But these rigid principles of their founder did not suit even the earliest Franciscans; for four years after his death, in 1230, they obtained from Pope Gregory IX. a bull which freed them from the obligation of strictly observing his testament. And thus, "manual labour, so well practised by the

* This exposition of monkish insolence is to be found in a curious book, called, "Les heureux succès de la Piété."

original monks, became odious; and mendicity, formerly odious, became honourable."*

In about half a century after the death of St. Francis, his followers grew intolerably presumptuous, importunate, and idle. So much so, that several of the bishops loudly declaimed against them. Under pretext of asking charity, these begging brothers mixed themselves up in all sorts of affairs, private and public; entering into the most secret concerns of a family, or obtaining deputations to negotiate treaties between states and sovereigns;† and finally, it was to them that was owing the establishment of the Inquisition.

The society on Catsberg is a branch of a great Trappist establishment in France. It was founded a few years back, by a painter of some celebrity, called Ruyssen, whose generosity took this singular channel for indulgence. He made a free grant to these monks of the house they inhabit, and a considerable portion of the land which surrounds it. The latter is not at present of much value, the soil being poor, and requiring more industry to make it productive than belongs to its present possessors. But the gift was generous, however its object might have been ill-chosen; and the monks have not only granted, as is supposed, an equivalent in heaven for this earthly donation, but the suspicion is abroad that they hastened the journey of their patron from this world to the next, to give him more speedy possession. Soon after the painter made his will, securing the bequest, he died suddenly; and the general inference is, that the Trappists were resolved to secure their succession against any possible caprice on the part of their benefactor. One would hope that this is a calumny. The will was, I understand, contested by some of his relatives; and the monks were deprived of a considerable share of the bequest, but confirmed in possession of the part they now enjoy.

* The following passage from St. Bonaventure is cited by Voltaire, in his Philosophical Dictionary:—

"These begging brothers, by their vagabond life, scandalize in place of edifying. Their importunity in demanding makes people afraid to encounter them, as if they were but robbers. Indeed, this importunity is a species of violence, which few can resist, and particularly when it comes from those whose very dress demands respect. But it is, in fact, the natural consequences of mendicity; for the beggar must live. Hunger and other pressing wants conquer the natural modesty of even the well educated; and once that this barrier is passed over, each considers it a merit and an honour to have more success than another in collecting alms."

† Abbé Hussey, a Trappist, was a celebrated diplomatic intriguer between several European courts, about the latter end of the last century.

Catsberg has, from the earliest times, been the favourite resort of Anchorites, who, before the French revolution, covered the hill. Soon after the establishment of the new order of things, (which means, I fear, a return to *the old,*) a few of the *Frères Barbettes*, or, as they are commonly called, the *Ignorantins*, took possession of the hill, and commenced their course of religious *enlightenment* and political *endarkenment*, neither of which received any encouragement from the neighbouring inhabitants, whose eyes had been opened too widely during a quarter of a century, to endure the *glare*, or be satisfied with the *gloom*. The ignorant instructers were consequently induced to abandon their position; and they were succeeded by the Trappists, who, in no way interfering with those around them, are tolerated, but by no means popular; and from being at first objects of curiosity, are now only subjects for contempt.

My guide up the hill appeared at my bedside soon after daybreak the following morning, bringing me the refreshments I had requested from my old hostess. I rose early; eat a hearty breakfast of excellent materials; gave what I thought a fair return for my entertainment; made my adieus to the prior, and accepted the almoner's offer to accompany me down the hill, to meet the cabriolet which waited for me at the village below.

My animated and talkative companion entered into most fluent explanations on every point of my inquiries; and with as much freedom as on any other, into the particulars of his own situation.

"What a happy life must yours be, in contrast with that of your secluded brethren," said I.

"Why, yes, Sir, it is: thanks to Heaven it is so, for *me*—but I have not enjoyed it long. I am the successor of another, even in the short time that our community has been formed here; and perhaps if you knew *his* story, you would acknowledge that the situation of begging brother is not one so desirable, or so free from worldly dangers as you now suppose."

"Perhaps not. But to enable me to form a just opinion on the point, you will probably tell me your predecessor's story?"

The hint was sufficient. It was no sooner thrown out, than my companion acted upon it. He not only walked down to the village, but he joined in my drive; and did not

quit me until he had partaken of my dinner in the old woman's *auberge*, at the cross roads leading to Bailleul and Roussebrugge. When we separated in the evening, as he returned to his monastery, I put something into his leathern purse, slightly adding to the funds of his society, and still more insufficiently recompensing his loss of time, and paying for the information he had given me. *That* I now proceed to communicate to my readers, with some probable variation of words, but none whatever of *circumstances*, as I learned them.

STORY OF

THE BEGGING BROTHER.

CHAPTER I.

It is full seven years since a lad, of about eighteen years of age, of delicate appearance, mild manners, and gentle, though not polished address, presented himself to the superior of the Trappist monastery, near Amiens, in Picardy, and demanded admission into the order. There was something altogether about this claimant for living burial that particularly struck the prior. He was dressed in the style of the better kind of farmers, and his air and conversation bespoke him of that class; but a tone of natural refinement gave a delicacy to all he said or did. He spoke French well, but with a Belgic accent; and to the prior's inquiries as to the motives which led him, so young, to desire the seclusion, and brave the hardships of the most rigid of the religious orders, he answered, with a modest fervour, that "he felt a call from Heaven."

According to the system of the society, no questions were asked of the youthful aspirant after solitude, silence, and self-denial, as to his name or profession, who he was, or whence he came. He was regularly accepted, the ceremonies performed, his duties pointed out, his dress presented to him, his cell assigned him, and he installed in it, under the appel of Brother Placidus. The calm facility with which the new brother entered into the functions of his station was quite remarkable. The closing of the gate that shut him from the world was echoed by no sigh of his; nor did any smile of satisfaction attend his entry into his newly-chosen state.

Nothing seemed unfitting or strange. The drapery of his costume hung easily on him; his shaven head appeared to cause him no inconvenience; the unbroken silence, the frugal fare, the midnight risings, nothing came amiss. It appeared as if he had at once dropped into the situation destined by Nature as his own peculiar place.

His attention to his duties was exemplary. He performed with untiring alacrity, for some months, services to which he was evidently unaccustomed; and he did works of manual hardship to which the appearance of his hands proved him a stranger. After the usual time of severe noviciate, his vows were completed; and he was then released from his brown dress, distinctive of the labouring brothers. It was replaced by the white cassock—and Placidus was accordingly appointed one of the singers of the mass.

In this new station, to which he succeeded with a tranquil resignation, that spoke neither pride nor pleasure, he continued to display the same contented perseverance that had from the first distinguished him. His regularity in attendance to the seven hours' daily service in the chapel, which his duty claimed, was never once interrupted. He was almost always the first to enter; and the earliest sound of the bell was generally struck by his hand. During all this while his health was unimpared. He retained his delicate appearance, but was never actually unwell. In strict pursuance of his vow, and of the rule of the order, no word escaped his lips; nor could the observing looks of the many who were seriously interested for him, obtain even one communicative glance from his unspeaking eye. His only converse was with his own thoughts—be they what they might.

For upwards of four years nothing occurred to break the monotonous course of the young Trappist's existence. No inquirers sought him; no wish or thought escaped him; and he was totally dead to the world. But at the expiration of the period mentioned, a new destiny awaited him; and, like a man risen from the grave, he was doomed to enter again upon the stage of life, and to explore scenes, and mix with society, in a way unknown to him, even before he immured himself within the monastery walls.

The establishment of the new branch of the Trappist order on Catsberg, required the appointment of a prior and almoner, with other offices. The prior, chosen from among the brothers, a man of good manners and education, as well

as strict and exemplary conduct, had no hesitation in approving the choice of Brother Placidus for his almoner, and "begging brother" to the institution.

It was not merely the quiet virtues and religious resignation of the young brother that made him the object of election to the elder ones. In abandoning the world the Trappists had not forgotten its ways; and they judged that the handsome features and interesting manners, the air of truth, and the mild enthusiasm of Placidus, was the most likely to soften the hearts of the benevolent public, and particularly that most sensitive sex, of whom donations were to be demanded, for an order of monks, unpopular from their overdone austerity, and from the vulgar notions which aggravate all that is repulsive in their practices. Besides, Brother Placidus was beyond doubt a Belgian; and as his eleemosynary efforts would take a round in the direction of his own country, not to interfere with those of the main establishment, his native language would be, in fact, a necessary qualification for his office.

When the arrangements were finally settled between the principals of the establishment, the newly appointed almoner was silently summoned to hear the official announcement of his nomination. He calmly rose from his seat, and shaking off the train of secret meditation in which he was absorbed, he followed the mute messenger by whom he had been beckoned, ignorant and indifferent as to the object for which he was required. Arrived at the door of the parlour, where the prior was used to receive visiters, or transact business, the heart of Brother Placidus beat with a palpitation unknown to him since he entered the same room, a suppliant for admission into the order, above four years before. The thought glanced across his mind, that perhaps some intrusive inquirer had come to break the stillness of his seclusion. He struggled to keep down his latent emotion; and, prepared to meet whoever might accost him, he entered the room.

He made a respectful obeisance as he entered; and raising his eyes, he observed no stranger face, nor yet one of those, of early association and endearment, on which the keen glance of affection can trace an expression ineffaceable by absence or age. The objects which presented themselves to his view were the prior, the brother named to the superintendance of the new branch society, and one other,

the almoner and begging brother of the present main establishment. These faces were not strange to Placidus; and although he had never exchanged a word with two of the persons, and not with the other for near five years, still the familiarity of daily intercourse, eating at the same table, and being mutually naturalized to the same locality, created a sort of visual intimacy, which removed all restraint from the young Trappist, and left him quite at his ease to hear whatever communication was about to be made.

The prior rose, and advancing with a cordial and benevolent smile, he gave his hand to Placidus, and said,

"Brother, the restriction of years is removed. The time is come when you may indulge in the privilege which is permitted to all of us present. Taciturnity, so salutary to the well being of the brotherhood in general, must be dispensed with in the acting members of the order; and I have to announce to you that you are chosen as one.'

The prior paused, and he and his associates awaited the evidences of grateful satisfaction, which they expected to witness in the looks and words of the young man. But no sound escaped him, and he only bowed obediently and respectfully, without the slightest change of countenance. The prior, pointing to a seat, which was taken by Placidus, and resuming his own, continued,

"A benevolent and pious individual has granted an endowment, of a house, land, and money, which enables us to extend our institution, by a new branch, to the very confines of Belgium; and it is on one of a little range of mountains called Catsberg, that our new society is to be placed."

At these words Brother Placidus seemed to shrink involuntarily, and a deep glow suffused his cheeks. But it passed quickly over. He drew his hand across his brow, and let it descend, as if mechanically, on his heart; while a sigh, half suppressed, heaved his bosom.

"The worthy brother here beside me," continued the prior, "has been chosen chief of this new formed station; and there, on the verge of Belgium, if not actually in it, a native brother of exemplary character and conduct, will be required to act as an almoner, and to make the usual rounds, demanding aid to our scanty funds from those charitable Christians in whom the love of religion is superior to the vanities of the world. Such a brother, so qualified, we have found in *you*, for you are, I believe, a Belgian, and the rest I answer for."

When the prior concluded, a pause of some minutes ensued. The young Trappist evidently laboured under some strong hidden emotion, which he strove to overcome, and which the observers respected too much to allow of their interrupting him. The very use of speech, so long prohibited to him, was difficult to recover. He made more than one effort for utterance before he succeeded; and when he really spoke, it was in so confused and incoherent a way that he was startled and abashed. He, however, expressed, in sufficient phrase, his gratitude to his superiors for their confidence and marked approbation; he declared his readiness to obey any call made on his services for the good of the brotherhood; but concluded by saying, that "taken by surprise as he was, having hoped and believed that he should have lingered out life and sunk to death in the quiet oblivion of his retreat, he must beg a few days to prepare himself for his new avocation, and demanded the favour of some instructions for his guidance in a calling for which he was sensible of his incompetence."

"Beloved brother," exclaimed the prior, "every indulgence, every consideration shall be given to your feelings and your wishes; and our good brother, Petrus Maria here, who has so long served in the capacity of almoner to our establishment, will give you such suggestions as may render light to you, and advantageous to the brotherhood, a task for which I am convinced you are pre-eminently suited."

After salutations and congratulations from the new superior with whom he was to serve, and a blessing from the prior, Placidus followed his brother almoner to the little room assigned to the latter, for the regulation of the receipts, disbursements. and general accounts of the establishment, all which were under his care and control.

Nothing could be more striking than the difference in all ways between the two almoners. The calm, pale, handsome countenance, and tall spare form of Placidus, were strongly contrasted with the coarse and swarthy visage, and short round figure of his Brother Petrus Maria. The latter had not been almoner and begging brother for seven or eight years for nothing. If he scrupulously performed his duties, he also conscientiously availed himself of the privileges allowed him by his station. Wearing, as permitted, in his begging excursions, the ordinary habiliments of common life, (with the exception of the horse-hair shirt,) and his own

black shock of hair growing out of all mode of La Trappeism, he also indulged freely in those points which hungry travellers consider necessaries of life. He ate heartily, and drank freely; and bore the natural marks of good living, in a speaking rotundity of person, and rubicundity of face.

Brother Petrus Maria had been chosen to his office from reasons the very opposite to those which led to the appointment of Placidus. It was his fluency of speech, his persevering address, (which might perhaps be translated *impudence*,) added to his knowledge of accounts, discovered by an accident, which formed the ostensible reason for his promotion. But he himself was frequently heard to declare that the real cause was his uncontrollable passion for talking, which made it almost impossible for him to observe the rule of taciturnity; that he was repeatedly near choking from being forced to swallow his half uttered words; and that if by chance he succeeded, in keeping silent for a day, he was sure to rouse the whole brotherhood of the domitory by talking in his sleep at night. This was *his* version of the motives for his appointment; and as he was a Gascon, the chances were equal as to its being false or true. But the reasons which first induced him to enter such an unsocial order, never transpired. It was indeed whispered that he chose that sanctuary, in preference to a chance of the galleys; and that his present integrity as a monk, was quite necessary to balance the account against his former roguery as a man. As it was, he was considered by the brotherhood invulnerably honest in his actual calling; and no mendicant was ever hailed on his rounds with greater pleasure than was Brother Petrus Maria, or, as he was familiarly called, Brother Pierre, particularly when he put on the ludicrous grimace which he called his *begging face*, and discharged some of his most celebrated gasconades.

"Welcome, Brother Placidus, to my little cabinet," said he, as they entered the room; "it is pleasant to be able to say, how do you do? to a friend for the first time after five years' acquaintance. Sit down, and let us see in what way I can be of any use to you."

"The favour I would require from you, Brother," said Placidus, with as much composure as the agitation of his mind and the extreme difficulty of articulation allowed, "is that of your advice and information, as to the means of fulfilling the arduous labours of the office I am appointed to,

so as best to acquit myself of so difficult and responsible a duty. But I do not at present wish to press this on you. I will allow you a day or two of undisturbed leisure, to form a little code of instructions for my guidance; and during the interval I hope to bring my mind to a state fitting to receive your kind and brotherly suggestions."

"A day or two, to form a code of instructions!" exclaimed the almoner, in surprise; the "arduous labours of your office! St. Peter preserve you, child, if these are the notions with which you enter upon it. Sit down, I tell you, and in ten minutes I 'll give you as much really useful knowledge on our mutual calling, as if I wearied myself and worried you with a volume of amplified trash—sit down—sit down."

Placidus obeyed the repeated invitations, took a chair, and prepared himself in equal astonishment and satisfaction, to hear the simple secrets of a duty which to him had appeared so complicated.

"Now, my dear Placidus," said the almoner, "to set your mind at ease all at once, what, let me ask you, is the nature of your duty and mine? In one word, to go a-begging—to go a-begging, my boy, neither more nor less! What so easy, so pleasant, so natural to a man? It 's an absolute instinct. Every one is born a beggar, and lives and dies the same. Many, to be sure, disguise their calling under the name of *borrowing*; but the only difference is, that your beggar *makes* no promise of payment, and your borrower *keeps* none. Others steal, rob, cheat—for there are nice distinctions—but all are only begging in masquerade: off-shoots from the native original root. I am a beggar by inclination as well as profession; and so are you, my brother, as you will find out on your very first essay. Well then, what so easy as to obey a natural impulse? The principal once felt, the practice will soon follow. But I will give you a rule or two, and a reason for each.

"First, never go a-begging, or a-borrowing, with a sad face or a shabby coat. Your poor devil, in evident distress of mind or circumstances, has no chance of relief. It is your joyous, bold-faced, well-fed, solvent fellow, that has only to ask and have; and why, Brother Placidus? because the charity of half the world is *selfishness*, that does a service, small or great, only in the hope of getting a greater in return.

"Second, always half fill your leather sack, as I do mine,

before you commence your collection. But take your purse out empty, and you will bring it back empty. And whenever you ask alms, be sure to rattle your money and open the mouth of your sack. There is a powerful magnet in gold that has been given to the poor; and the elements of the attraction are vanity and envy mixed; for the charity of the other half of the world, Brother Placidus, is *ostentation*, that prompts a man to do as much or more than his neighbour, although he would let that neighbour starve if he chanced to fall into want."

Placidus, whose look of attention had gradually changed into a stare of horror, took advantage of the pause in the almoner's discourse, to express his feelings.

"Brother, brother," exclaimed he, "can this picture be real? You shock and terrify me! Is this indeed the world I am about to enter?"

"Ay, that it is," replied Petrus Maria, "a very true picture of worldly benevolence in general; but there are, no doubt, some exceptions. For instance, in a town of twenty thousand souls, you may receive aid from fifty who give money from mere recklessness, from a love of squandering, they care not how; a couple of hundred cowardly rogues may *hope* to buy off their ill-doings by a false benevolence; and *perhaps* half a dozen individuals may drop their mite into your sack, in the pure spirit of charity."

"And such are the exceptions?" murmured Placidus, covering his face with his hands.

"Excuse me, brother," said his companion, "for causing an ungratified longing to your palate, while I satisfy mine—a man who talks must drink. Liquor is the food of speech:" and thus I avail myself of my dispensation:" and he filled from a corpulent flagon, a glass of some rosy-coloured liquid, which he quaffed instantly.

Placidus scarcely observed him, and his palate was quite unconscious of his brother's indulgence. The latter, after repeated smackings of lips, and accompanying evolutions of tongue, that nothing might be lost to the unimbibed liquor, resumed his lecture.

"Of such materials, my dear brother, is composed the mass of beings among whom you are to recruit the funds of your young establishment. I know them well, in all their varieties; and I will give you a hint or two as to the way of managing them."

"Managing them!" echoed Placidus, with a strong emphasis.

"Ay, manœuvring them—working on their feelings, if they have any; on their *failings*, if not. There is nothing, Brother Placidus, that we must not do, for the good of our order and the love of God. Remember, then, whenever you ask alms of a rich man, to appeal to his charity; if you beg from a man of moderate means, talk of his wealth; if women are the objects of your solicitations, you must praise the liberality of the old, the freshness of the middle-aged and fading, the piety of the young and vain. Thus you give credit to all classes, of both sexes, for what they have not, the reputation of which is just what they are best pleased to pay for; and, as one grand rule, *flatter all*. Be a perfect Turk in that respect—spare neither sex nor age; and you 'll see, Brother Placidus, how fast the strong box of Catsberg will fill."

The harangue finished, Petrus Maria paused for breath, and poor Placidus sat gasping from agitation. He waited a while, in expectation of more of this revolting advice; but finding, by a significant nod from his companion, that there was no more to be said, he rose to depart. Oppressed with a thousand conflicting sensations, and unused to the forms of the world, he quitted the room in silence; and he heard his late counsellor murmur as he retired,

"St. Peter preserve the boy! If he does not mend his manners before he goes his rounds, my poor brothers on Catsberg will have their beer-barrel filled with water, and be cut short of their inch of cheese for a whole month."

Placidus passed with hurried steps along the corridor, and had just reached a landing-place, from which a flight of narrow stairs led to his cell, when he encountered the prior, who had been paying a patro-fraternal visit to a sick brother above. This chance meeting seemed to Placidus a dispensation of Providence, to save him from the fate which appeared gaping to ingulph him. Following the hurried impulse of the moment, he flung himself at the prior's feet, and seizing him by the flowing folds of his dress, he sobbed forth, in scarce articulate utterance, his incoherent appeal. The first words distinctly understood by the prior were these:—

"For mercy sake, do not insist on this. It is too much for me—the frightful picture drawn by our brother yonder,

of the hideous world, half drives me mad. I could not serve the brotherhood in such a station—I should sink under duties I was unable to perform—and all would end in injury to our order, and my own disgrace! Spare me, spare me from this dreadful result—relieve me from this misery—appoint some more fitting brother, I implore you—and let me but retire into the silence and solitude of my former state. Oh! take pity on me, and grant my humble and heart-inspired prayer!"

"Beloved brother," said the prior, in his kindest tone, feeling sincerely for the agitation of the youth, and at the same time remembering the weighty reasons for keeping him firm in his situation, "this emotion is but natural in a youthful and innocent mind. It gives the best surety of your fitness for the duties you will have to fulfil. Your appointment was the result of mature deliberation—the best interests of the new establishment are involved in it—it is, in short, irrevocable. But I am fully sensible of what you suffer, which, trust me, is only temporary. You will not find the world so bad as you expect. An upright man may safely hold with it such intercourse as yours, and walk unharmed through all its maze of vice. Brother Petrus Maria has perhaps coloured his picture too highly. He is rather satirical by nature, a little cynical by habit, and *provincially* inclined to exaggeration withal. But I, too, have known the world—its bad and its good parts. I have known the meanness, the treachery, the selfishness of men, but I also have known their integrity and truth; and I have *felt*, dear Placidus, the healing breath of woman's virtue and ever-verdant faith, giving balm to the lacerated heart, and filling it anew with health and hope! Hasten to your silent cell—to your humble couch—commune with your innocent soul—all will be well. You have agitated me somewhat, and revived long-buried thoughts. This must not be!"

With these words the prior moved away, leaving Placidus struck with his evident emotion; but how much more a victim to his own! A new train of feeling was revived in his mind by the unpremeditated expression of that which had escaped his superior. The newly pictured world had faded from his view, and imagination hurried him back to days and scenes, that even the effacing wing of Time had failed to blot from his mind.

In this mood he reached his cell. He lay down on his

lowly couch. The night he passed was pitiable, compared even to Trappist's usual sad and scant repose. Unceasing sobs were heard by his solitary neighbours till the chapel bell and daybreak summoned them away; and for the first time since his admission to the order, Brother Placidus failed to aid at the celebration of the midnight mass.

CHAPTER II.

In a few weeks afterward the new branch of the brotherhood was firmly established on Catsberg. The portion of the building assigned to their use was fitted up in the manner suited to such tenants; and never were furnished lodgings less encumbered with furniture. The garden-ground was soon laid out, and the hungry earth fed with the seeds and plants which it was to reproduce in fruits and flowers. The working space was enclosed, and the sterile soil beyond it dug up and prepared, as much as its savage nature would allow, for the refinements of culture.

The ten or a dozen brothers who, with the prior and Placidus, had thus colonized the hill, were all soon named to their respective occupations; and the younger almoner would gladly have exchanged his place for any of theirs, even at the risk of the healthy, but ungodly, glow that was forced into their cheeks by the labours which nature pointed out for man. While all these various works went on, Placidus was more tranquilly, but not less usefully employed. He had not repeated his visit to brother Petrus Maria. He preferred rather the conferences and counsel of the venerable prior and his own immediate superior; and by force of piety and resignation, he gradually saw in a less fearful aspect the monstrous expanse of difficulty and danger into which he was about to be launched.

But habit, still more powerful than advice, did wonders for him. The very day he quitted the monastery walls, and saw the champagne country opening out before him, he could not suppress the spring of delight that gushed spontaneous from his heart. He was evidently, for a moment, transported with a feeling of happiness. It seemed as if nature had really

spoken to him with her melodious yet thrilling voice, for he answered, as it were, by a loud uttered exclamation—"Yes, oh, yes, it is beautiful!"

Arrived at Catsberg, he entered into the active duties of his office with a species of vivacity which was surprising even to himself. It was the excitement of variety that irresistibly affected him, and threw an unhoped-for interest into his new pursuits. He arranged his accounts, and commenced his disbursements for the little society, and found a charm in occupation that quite astonished him. But the settled melancholy which in his former state of taciturn seclusion was not so evident, threw a deep shade over his manners in his new career. Long habits of profound silence made conversation irksome to him; and the little dealers in the village below the hill, from whom he made his purchases, and who looked with an evil eye upon the young establishment of monkery, thought brother Placidus but a morose specimen of their new neighbours.

Placidus availed himself but sparingly of his privilege to go abroad. The garden walks were his usual promenade: yet he sometimes paced with hurried steps the *heath*-clad summit of the hill; and he was observed to make a regular daily visit (to whom his demeanour gave the air of a pilgrimage,) to one point of a rocky acclivity that hung over the valley which divided Catsberg from Scarpenberg. This valley was peculiarly romantic. It narrowed gradually into a glen, the shades of which formed a deep but not repulsive contrast with the open glade. The whole scene, lighted up by the joyous sun at spring-tide, the young leaves warmed into daily growth, and fluttering in the genial beams, like half-fledged birds afraid to make their first flight, was indeed lovely to look at. But it was evidently not the beauty of the scene that attracted Placidus, and fixed his ardent gaze upon the view beneath him. It was the mental vision that turned inwards on himself, and searched the mazes of memory with its piercing glance, that could alone have absorbed him; and more than once a straggling brother, following his errant cows or goats through the brushwood on the hill side, observed the young almoner seated on some rocky projection, or stretched upon the heath, while sighs burst from him audible in the little copse beneath.

Some weeks having thus passed by, the brotherhood being established firmly, and their numbers increased by a few

fanatics, or recruits less innocent, the neighbourhood, which had flocked in crowds to stare at the first comers, began to be familiarized to their grotesque appearance, and the general repugnance seemed gradually to wear away. The prior thought that this was the time to levy his first contribution; and he accordingly directed Placidus to prepare for his opening excursion, in his capacity of begging-brother.

It was on a fine morning in May, such as nurtures hope and confidence in the human heart, that Placidus doffed his usual costume; and, dressed in a neat suit of black, with his stick in his hand, he took his way down the path leading to the village, having first received the blessing of the prior, and having himself implored that of a higher authority, at the foot of the altar in the little chapel. He felt an unwonted elation of spirits—he knew no humiliation in the mendicant purpose which sent him forth—he trusted that he was about to serve the interests of his order, and his countenance involuntarily reflected the cheerfulness of his mind. He so far, without design, fulfilled the first of brother Petrus Maria's instructions; but as to that which related to the garniture of his purse, he could not reconcile himself to the trick recommended by the less scrupulous and more practised almoner. It was therefore empty; and, like its bearer, ready to receive the gifts of the benevolent, unsullied by the jugglery of deceit.

As Placidus descended the hill, he could not help being struck with the recollection of Petrus Maria's axiom, "that begging was an instinct;" and of his prophecy that Placidus himself would feel and acknowledge it on his first essay. "Be it so!" exclaimed he, mentally. "Why then should I differ from the rest of my kind? Thousands of the holiest of men have asked alms—Religion and the rules of my order sanctify the deed—I beg not for myself alone, and feel ennobled rather than degraded in the humble office. Now then to begin!"

He just then stood before the village inn, which, besides the common announcements of liquor and lodging, had the word "Brouwerie," which requires no translation, painted in large letters over the rudely daubed tulip which hung above the door. It was here that Placidus had heretofore resorted for the purchase of the beer scantily consumed by the brethren above. When the hostess and retailer of liquefied malt and hops, saw Placidus in his black dress, she did not recognise

him for the white-robed Trappist, to whose occasional visits of purchase she was accustomed; and when, on examination, she recalled his features, she could scarcely believe his cheerful countenance and affable demeanour to belong to her former melancholy and unsocial customer. She naturally imagined that the young man had emancipated himself from his vows, and renounced the fellowship of his austere and ill-fed companions, and, stretching out her hand, she wished him joy of the change, in terms of much warmth.

"I always suspected it would end this way," said she, giving him no time for a reply to her first mistaken congratulation. "Extremes touch, they say, and I thought such excessive piety would have a wild fling at last—the barrel was too full to escape bursting! Come in, come into the house, Mr. Placidus, if that is the name we are still to give you—but happy I am, for your sake, not to call you *brother* any longer. A good breakfast is a stranger to your stomach. You shall have the best that the house affords; a slice of bacon, with the thigh of a potted goose, a bottle of beer, such as they never taste on the mountain, believe me, and the best of *caffé au-lait*, bread and fresh butter. What do you think of that? It does my heart good to see your comely countenance brightened with a smile. Come in, come in."

The constitutional serenity of Placidus was not ruffled by this abrupt and ill-timed volley of felicitations. "My good dame," said he, without obeying her invitation, "your kind wishes gratify me, but their expression is founded in mistake. I am still a Trappist, still *Brother* Placidus, still the almoner, and still what I have been all along, the caterer for the trifling wants of my brethren!"

"Indeed! you do astonish me," exclaimed the hostess, "but you are not the less welcome, good Brother Placidus;" and this might have been true, for having a fair portion of the natural taste for gain, it was probably equal to her whether she made her profit on potted goose or barreled beer. Supposing, therefore, that her visiter came on his usual purpose of purchasing the latter commodity, she still pressed him to come in, assuring him that the last brewing surpassed in excellence all that he had before bought of, and proposing to send up a small cask to the monastery before the great demand of the neighbouring farmers had consumed all. "And pray," continued she, "excuse my error, in supposing you had parted company from the worthy gentleme

of the monastery; it arose from seeing you in this christian suit of clothes, instead of the outlandish dress in which you and the other good brothers usually roam about the hill, like so many Turks without their turbans."

"Where no offence is meant, no apology is required, my good dame," said Placidus. "But you see me now in a character which you never knew me to assume before—the begging brother for our establishment!" And with these words he drew forth his leathern purse. The lank appearance of this recipient, which had hitherto opened before the landlady in much better plight, did not escape the quickness of her eye; and a sudden revolution of feeling was excited within her. She seemed seized with a shrinking antipathy to every thing that appertained to Trappism and beggary. The strings of her heart seemed instinctively tightening, as though her money had been deposited in its core.

"Yes, Madam," continued Placidus, glowing with the animation inspired by this first effort in the service of his brethren, "I am now but the humble mendicant, no longer the liberal purchaser for my brother Trappists. You know, without doubt, that our order subsists on the alms of the charitable; and our little funds being now nearly expended, I this day commence a collection, to which I trust you will be the first to contribute."

"Me indeed! then you are much mistaken, Mister Mendicant. Me subscribe to the support of a parcel of lazy, good-for-nothing fellows, who do nothing but frighten the poor peasants with their grim looks, and haven't as much as a civil word to give to a body. No, no, not I indeed—not an *ortje**—so good morning, Sir, and a pleasant walk to you."

"Well, well," said Placidus, as he turned away, unruffled by her rude refusal, "this is a bad beginning: but, after all, the poorer we are the less beer we shall drink, and a trifle bestowed in charity might have been returned a hundred fold in honest profit."

He fairly struck the chord: all the national and personal feelings of the hostess answered in unison to his inuendo. She quickly returned towards him, and with a hard-wrought smile, she exclaimed, "Well, there is no resisting the workings of one's heart. I gave a hasty denial, my good Brother

* Half a farthing.

Placidus, and I am afraid not an over civil one. But I don't know what came over me—I don't, indeed. I am sure I never would have refused to contribute to the comforts of the good brotherhood of the hill, had I considered a moment. Open your little sack, and let this drop to the bottom of it. I heartily hope it may bring you luck. Would you like to take any thing?—just one glass of the new tap?"

Placidus excused himself, thanked the *re*-considerate landlady for her bounty, and walked away, not less satisfied at the donation than at his own address in exciting the ruling passion to which it was due.

Encouraged by this success, his next attempt was undertaken with still more confidence and self-command. He approached the house of one of the wealthiest farmers of the district, who had fixed his residence in the village, which was nearly surrounded by his various tenants. The large and well-built house, and its corresponding appurtenances, excited high hopes of a handsome donation, and Placidus entered at the half open door with a feeling of gratitude for the anticipated gift.

Farmer Cloots happened to be at the moment in the common room, which, as usual in the country, served for kitchen and parlour to the family. A large table was spread for the breakfast of the whole establishment, consisting of master and mistress, their sons and daughters, and all the servants, in-door and out. Substantial loaves, butter, eggs, and cheese, gave evidence of liberal housekeeping; while the large coffee-pot, simmering by the fireside, and the proportionate saucepan of milk upon the fire, told that good and generous living was common to all. Placidus augured still more favourably from these symptoms, and he readily advanced, on the invitation of the farmer, whose portly frame presented itself with a full front, his back to the fire, and his hands in his breeches pockets, in each of which he rattled sundry pieces of money. At either side of him sat a female, one the partner of all his good fortune for life, who was occupied in preparations for making the *café au lait;* the other was a wo-begone figure in widow's weeds, who silently gazed on the flaming fagots, and seemed to read in them the history of her own misfortunes.

"Welcome, Sir, to house and table!" said the farmer, with ostentatious hospitality, as Placidus took off his hat and

bowed to the trio: "to what, and to whom, may I ask, am I indebted for this visit?"

"I am, Sir, the alms-asking brother of the monks of La Trappe, established hard by, on Catsberg; and my object in this intrusion is to solicit your bounty towards the funds of an order whose sole means of subsistence are the donations of the pious and charitable."

"Ha!" interjected the farmer, screwing up his mouth, and buttoning his breeches pockets, "I have been expecting the honour of a visit like this: I wondered why you gentry forbore so long from levying a tax on your industrious neighbours; but I suppose you were too busy in digging your graves. You say, Sir, that you live on donations from the pious and charitable. Well, I am, I hope and trust, both one and the other"—(here his hands resumed their employment of rattling among his money)—"but neither piety nor charity tell me to pay a premium upon sloth; therefore, you get no donation from me!" again buttoning up his pockets. "Yes, Master Mendicant, I trust I am *pious*: I hear mass every morning, and I confess once a month. I believe I am *charitable*, as this poor woman can attest, who lives on my bounty, and has this very moment shared it!"—and once more the chink of gold and silver sounded on either thigh; "but I have nothing for the idle—nothing!"

"Nothing, or less than that, if possible," chimed in the for-better-for-worse companion of the last speaker; while a rather nice-looking girl, the eldest daughter of the well-matched couple, pulled her mother's apron, and elbowed her reproachfully, at the same time casting a look or two at the handsome almoner.

"I must receive your refusal with as much resignation," said Placidus, "as your bounty would have excited gratitude. I cannot force your purse to open, nor do I judge your actions, though you are so unsparing of ours: but I little expected" (and here he addressed the wife) "that Madame Vermoot, at the Tulip, yonder, would have given while you refused; and I hope, Sir," turning to the farmer, "that a blessing will not be withheld from the doings of him who scorns and insults the poor."

Placidus bowed low, and was quitting the house, when he perceived the widow glide out of the door; and at the same moment the mistress of the mansion briskly demanded, "if, indeed, Madame Vermoot had given any thing?"

Placidus replied by producing the small piece of gold he had received from the hostess.

"No," said the *charitable* dame, "it shall never be said in the village that Vrowe Vermoot, the brewer, was before me in any thing. Here, take this piece, double the value of hers, and put it in your sack, and let them jingle together, to tell which sounds the loudest."

"I have been thinking, Mister Trappist," exclaimed the farmer, even before his mate had finished her amiable harangue, "that one might as well not be so severe as I was just now. I am sure if any man merits a blessing, I do. I pray enough, and give enough to ensure it, at any rate; and I must not risk its loss, after all, by any want of moderate assistance to the deserving, as no doubt you and your brethren may be, in your own way. Pray accept this—do you think that enough to secure me from ill luck? You shall have more, if you really believe, in honesty and conscience, that that is not sufficient—but I hope it is—what do you say, Sir?" and a silver coin, of no great value, was held forth by this compound of ostentation and superstition. Placidus allowed the money to drop into his sack, answering *only* by a bow of thanks, and quitted the house, giving a grateful smile to the daughter, whose considerate interference to spare his feelings from hurt, had not been lost on him. As he paused for a moment in the village street, to consider where he should next apply, a "Hem!" two or three times repeated, attracted his attention, and looking towards the sound, he saw the farmer's widowed pensioner standing half concealed in a recess, formed by the separation of two of the houses near him. She beckoned him to approach, and when he joined her, she said in a timid tone,

"My good Sir, excuse the humble offering of a forlorn woman; and let this mite prove her wish to share her pittance with those scarcely poorer than she is. It is part of the weekly allowance which conscience wrings from that hard-hearted man—a feeble recompense for all the ill his avarice brought on me and mine. Take this, Sir, and my blessing with it, and excuse my boldness."

She then, with downcast eyes, offered a piece of money. Placidus was deeply affected by the humility of genuine charity, coming in such soothing contrast with the spurious examples he had just witnessed. He closed the widow's hand upon her money, and pressed it between his.

"Excellent woman," said he, and his voice faltered as he spoke, "I *will* accept your blessing, but dare not take from your scanty store. In rejecting this sacred offering, I violate no duty to those whose wants have sent me forth. The poor must not prey upon the poor! Your gift has sanctified the little I possess, by the very intention of their mixing together, and Heaven's treasury will largely repay the proffered loan. Farewell, and may your blessing be returned a thousand fold! Farewell!"

It was thus, in such scenes as those, (sketched from his own brief recital of them to the prior) that Placidus continued his rounds of alms asking. In a short time he had seen human nature in many of its capricious forms, and he did not neglect to profit by his experience. He had, as has been seen, on his earliest attempt, availed himself of his intuitive knowledge of the heart, and of his acquaintance with the two leading faults of his nation—avarice and superstition. Resolved to extract what was good from every thing that tended towards the well being of those for whom he was the agent, he was not unmindful of Petrus Maria's advice, "to work on the failings of mankind." This he thought all fair, for a just and pious object; but he never degraded himself or his calling by any unworthy tampering with the feelings or passions of those he begged from; and he scorned to blend servility with the natural humbleness of his spirit.

He mixed a good deal with rich and poor, as he took the circuit of the neighbouring towns, and he came unharmed and unsullied through the ordeal he had dreaded so much. He had considerable success in his collections, and brought handsome returns to the monastery's store. He throve in his vocation; he looked, in a few months, healthy and strong, in comparison to his former delicate appearance; and he felt an elasticity, a vigour, and an expansion of mind, which he at once enjoyed and was amazed at. But the wonder is easily solved. It was *employment* that performed this magical change—that simple cure for all the indolent and dissipated portion of mankind, who waste in sloth the precious goods of time, and let them slip away like the sands that trickle in his glass.

Bailleul, Poperingue, Cassel, and all their surrounding neighbourhood, were in their turns visited by the begging brother; but it was remarked, that he studiously avoided the glen which divided Catsberg from Scarpenberg.

CHAPTER III.

The summer months were passing rapidly away. The last Sunday in July had arrived, and the begging brother, after his most distant and most successful expedition in search of alms, was returning to Catsberg, on his route from Ostend, when he entered the town of Furnes, between three and four o'clock in the afternoon. He had quitted the barge that carried him to the end of the open suburb called the Nieuport-*gate;* and, as he walked forwards, that appellation gave rise to many a reflection on the mutability of human creations. Not a fragment was discoverable of what was formerly the strong built bulwark of this ancient place. The name of *rampart*, still attached to the green hedged walk and bordering gardens which wind round three parts of the town, is another instance of the courtesy of recollection speaking to the pride of ruined grandeur.

As Placidus walked on, the loud and rapid *tolling* of a church bell gave notice of some evening ceremony, more than the mere chanting of vespers. His pious feelings were gratified at the opportunity so promised him of joining in some holy rite; and a sentiment of religion blended with the historic and philosophical reflections that filled his mind. He moved quickly towards the centre of the town. The street he walked through, which seemed quite destitute of inhabitants, was strewed with herbs and flowers; and the mean and diminutive houses at each side were hung with every rag of drapery that their poverty could supply. Groups of peasants were entering the town, and all wending towards the church, a deep expression of superstitious curiosity stamped on the majority of the faces, from which the atmosphere of their native marshes had forced every wholesome tint.

The cheerless and poverty-stricken aspect of all he saw, gave the contemplative Trappist ample occasion to moralize on the existing contrast with the state of this very town, some centuries back, when it had eight seigneuries and nearly fifty villages in its jurisdiction, when the counts of Flanders made it their occasional residence, and the central point of their splendour, braving, for its attractions and advantages

(hard at this day to trace or imagine), the danger of its climate, at all times proverbial.

Placidus reached the principal square. The crowd which filled it, as well as his own curiosity to examine it, made him pause at the opening from the street which he was quitting. Before his mind wholly gave up its reverie on times past, it lingered a moment on the associations connected with the objects around. His eye rested on the large brick mansion on his right hand. In its crumbling edges and the curious masonry of its angular roofs, he read age and respectability, while the iron-grated windows spoke its modern purpose, of coercion and misery. The florid architecture of the mansion occupying the opposite corner of the square, its elevation over the neighbouring dwellings, and the national and civic arms ornamenting its porches and windows, revealed its quality, as the ancient residence of sovereigns and governors, and its present use, as the seat of judicial and corporate importance. But his attention was soon drawn from these dull memorials of past or present scenes to a display of human weakness, in the guise of a religious ceremony, almost unparalleled for absurdity, and which, had impiety, instead of superstition, been its motive, would rank among the most flagrant outrages upon that which it is meant to honour.

The whole of the large square, which serves for market-place, was filled with a throng of inhabitants and country people, mingled together in a common mass of gaping and awe-struck anxiety. On Placidus inquiring as to the cause of the assemblage, he was told by a man beside him, in a whisper of deep reverence, that the procession of "The Passion" was just on the point of departure from the church, the approach to which he pointed out in the opposite corner of the square, beside the Hotel de Ville. Placidus having ascertained from his informant the route in which the procession was to move, contrived, in the activity of his zeal, to witness it closely, to work his way through the crowd, and finally to fix himself in a niche of one of the old houses, from which he could command an uninterrupted view.

The sudden silence of the bell which had so long pealed its notice of the approaching ceremony, was now the announcement that it had commenced. An immediate and perfect stillness pervaded the multitude that had hitherto mingled its murmurings with the tolling sound. Every head

was instantly uncovered: every knee was on the earth: not a voice was to be heard; and as Placidus overlooked the silent mass, and marked the thousands close jammed together, their bended bodies moving involuntarily to and fro, in wave-like agitation, he was impressed by the solemn spectacle of human power bowed down by what fanaticism elevates into religious awe, but what philosophy pronounces servile fear.

The softened harmonies of a band of music, the chanting of the priests, the voices of the choristers, broke faintly on the ear; and, as the procession advanced, increased into a full swell of harmony. The banners, common to this and a hundred other mummeries, were now seen moving along; and the whole display of priestly fraud and popular folly was evident in minute detail, sanctioned by the presence of all the judicial and executive authorities of the town, whose cloak of political hypocrisy was impervious to the gaze of their rustic dupes.

I shall not attempt a minute description of the procession of the Passion* annually exhibited in the town of Furnes. It is enough to state that all the circumstances of that deeply affecting event are parodied, with a revolting defiance to the solemnity of its record. The character of Christ and his apostles, and the other personages connected with the subject, are represented in this spectacle, by simple villagers, from motives of true piety, and sometimes by less innocent actors, in a spirit not so pure. On all, however, the masquerade sits ludicrously ill. The mountebank costume and mock demeanour being alike disgusting and absurd.

To the observing group of town's-people whom the spirit of enlightenment has awakened from the dark trance which still enshrouds the majority of their countrymen, the view of this exhibition, taken in connexion with their knowledge of the mummers that enact it, must be infinitely amusing or intensely painful, in proportion to the feebleness or force of their religious feelings. But Placidus saw no subject for either levity or regret in the paltry pageant which passed by him. His enthusiasm, his long and deep-formed habits, the absorption which his mental faculties had undergone, on matters of religious *feeling* in concert with sectarian *form*, all conspired to blind him to the reality of what he witnessed;

* For an account of the origin of this ceremony, see note at the end.

and not one of the ignorant fanatics that figured in the scene was more darkly unconscious of the degradation thus inflicted upon man, and the insult it implied to his Maker.

The only part of this procession that has the least claim to the sympathy of common sense is that which closes it, and which is formed by *real* sentiment and suffering combined. It consists of the wives, sisters, children, or attached friends of the victims to disease, who at all times abound at Furnes, but more particularly in the fever-breeding weeks that close the summer season. Although the most certain epoch for this local plague had not, at the time I describe, actually arrived, there was still enough of illness in the town and neighbourhood to secure a long train of suppliant females, many of whose pale and sunken features gave evidence that neither health nor hope were strong within them. But there was one observable among the train, the beauty of whose countenance marked her for admiration, while an expression of animated piety distinguished her whole air from the sombre superstition of those that preceded and followed her. Her plain and modest dress showed her to own no higher rank than that of the agricultural class of small landholders, who, with their tenant peasantry, chiefly composed the procession. A white veil hung loosely from her head, which was covered with a close cambric cap, bordered with deep lace. An unembroidered muslin robe formed the remainder of her costume, as she walked on, a long wax taper in her hand, ready, when the procession should be over, to burn before the shrine of her peculiar saint.

As this interesting figure approached the spot where Placidus stood, his eye was fixed upon her with an ardent and searching expression, that lasted but one moment. In the next, he exclaimed aloud, "Gracious Heaven! It is she—Melanie!"

At the sound of this voice, and the call upon her by name, the young female stopped suddenly, looked incredulously towards the place where Placidus had stood, and interrupted for an instant the regular march of the procession. But her eyes found not what they sought. Placidus had left his station, and was seen, to the utter amaze of the persons round him, rushing into the very centre of the crowd, whose undulating movement marked where he had forced his way. The young woman, baffled in her apparent hope of seeing the person she sought, attempted for a while to recover her-

self, and then strove to continue her forward movement. But she was soon forced, by her emotion, to pause once more. Her face became pale, tears started to her eyes, and she was nearly letting fall her consecrated taper to the earth, where it was evident she would soon herself have sunk, had not a fine-looking young man stepped quickly into the line of the procession, caught her in his arms, and led her into one of the houses.

The intrusive and fugitive Trappist was soon obliged to stop, finding it impossible to penetrate far into the resistance opposed by the passive density of the crowd. He could not, if he would, retrace his passage; and he was consequently forced to remain in this imprisonment, during the entire continuance of the solemn mockery which paraded the square and streets.

At length the crowd began by degrees to dissolve. The loosened mass of human beings separated little by little, and Placidus had free room for egress. But when the opportunity was afforded he seemed unconscious of it, and he stood in a state of stupified abstraction, until the square was almost totally abandoned by the assemblage; and when at length he started from this unconsciousness, *he found himself* quite alone, close by the fountain in the middle of the square. He cast his looks around, and soon perceived that he had attracted the observation of a few stragglers, who eyed him curiously from a distance.

Recovering at once enough of self-possession to know the awkwardness of his situation, and regain power to fly from it, he hurried away. He hastened towards the nearest outlet from the town; and on inquiring of a lounging inhabitant of the suburb, he found that he had taken, by chance, the very road he sought—that leading to Ypres and Poperingues. In this direction he walked for full two hours, mechanically proceeding towards Catsberg, but every mental movement retrograding far from all the actual circumstances of his present home and state. Still he fled towards that cheerless home, as if it were a sanctuary from pursuing thought, like some hunted animal, vainly seeking shelter in its solitary lair.

He had reached the opening of the by-road, which branches from the main *chaussée*, leading direct to Ypres, and he turned into that secluded and rather gloomy track, which the finger-post pointed out as the readiest way t

Steinwort, a bourg in the close neighbourhood of the monastery. Nothing could be more oppressive to a mind, harassed by painful excitement, than the effect of the surrounding scenery, with the loaded and almost suffocating state of the atmosphere. The country was thickly wooded. The outstretching branches of the trees were unmoved by any breath of air: their heavy shadows lay upon the road, without any of those fantastic shiftings by which they often trace a moral on the path of a lonely wanderer, and like the caprices of fortune on "the broad highway of the world," leave him for a moment in sunshine only to replunge him into shade. Distant thunder had, during the whole afternoon, been faintly echoing in the sky, and its vague murmurings seemed in unison with the oppressive combination through which the Trappist slowly plodded along.

An interruption consistent with the scene at length aroused him, and caused him to look up. It was a thick cloud of dust that suddenly and silently enveloped him, the state of the road having prevented his hearing the trot of the huge chesnut Flanders' mare, whose heavy hoofs ploughed up the sand beside him. Through the dimness of the dust Placidus observed the figure which bestrode the animal. It was that of a man, of a size proportionate to his beast, a complete model of a wealthy Belgian farmer. His head was covered with a fox-skin cap, the long leather shade in front of which stood out far before the outline of his face, and more than half concealed it from view. A blue cotton smock-frock, thickly worked with red worsted round the neck and on the breast, preserved his holyday clothing from damage. The bottom edge of this garment, which the trot of his mare had worked up above his knees, was met by the tops of an unwieldy pair of boots, such as are worn by the heaviest of our heavy dragoons. Attached to this important portion of the habiliments of a Belgian cavalier, were a pair of silver spurs, of great thickness and length; a whip, the handle heavily mounted with the same metal, in the form of a hammer, hung by a leather thong on the horseman's right arm; the reins of a cumbrous bridle lay loosely on his left wrist, and he sat entrenched in the unshapely depth of a saddle, which rose high before and behind him, and nearly covered with its broad square flaps the whole carcass of the animal that was doomed to bear its weight; it, as well as the bridle and crupper, was thickly studded with brass buckles and

plates in various devices. Underneath was a crimson cloth, bound with yellow worsted tape; the undermost of all the housings being a green net, which did not leave a bit of the overloaded mare, from head to tail, free from encumbrance of one kind or another. Even the poor tail itself, which would have delighted in switching off the flies that left in many places bleeding traces of their assaults, was clubbed up, and tied in an ungainly lump with a wisp of straw, quite out of keeping with the caparison I have described. The horseman sat, body and limbs alike, in a dangling sort of lounge, a rather costly pipe in his mouth, from which he puffed a cloud of smoke nearly as thick as that of dust ascending all around him.

A half-muttered salutation escaped with one of these exhalations, as the rider came close upon Placidus. The latter, taken quite by surprise, did not make any acknowledgment. The other repeated his words of vapoury courtesy, in a tone not very loud, but sufficiently astounding to the Trappist to make him start with astonishment.

"Good God!" said he, almost to the hearing of the horseman "what am I to think of this? Am I indeed discovered and beset?"

But the horseman did not actually hear the exclamation, and in a fit of furious irritation at receiving no reply to his twice-uttered civilities, he pulled up his reins, with a quickness and force acting so suddenly on the severe and heavy bit, as to make the mare rear up erect, while she threw her fore legs forward, so close to Placidus, that he suddenly sprang across the ditch. A fierce application of the rider's spurs brought the mare again to her proper equilibrium; but she plunged violently, and while an angry contest took place between her and her master, he exclaimed, in a voice of thunder, to the alarmed Trappist,

"Good evening, Sir! Good evening to you, I say! That is the third or fourth time I have said it, and I don't know what you mean by your insulting silence, nor will I bear it—so good evening, I say, once more!"

His passionate emotion barely allowed him to hear the trappist's timid reply.

"I am glad you have found your tongue, Sir," cried he, in a somewhat softened tone, "for I hate quarrelling—but I can't stand an insult. But why do you quit the road? Perhaps you are more afraid of me than of my mare? But you

need not be so, for I am not a robber, young man. You may safely come through the hedge again. Joos Cooperslaugen, of Scarpenberg, is not a name to be scared at; it is pretty well known in these parts. Come, come, take to the road again, you will have bad walking in that copse: I have told you who I am."

"I know it but too well!" said the Trappist mournfully to himself; and a deep sigh was the only audible answer to the choleric horseman's speech. The instant Placidus had heard the sound of his voice, he recognised him for an old acquaintance of his earliest years: one connected with all that had attached him to the world, and driven him from it in his boyish days, the father of that lovely female, whose sudden apparition in the procession had forced the astonished Trappist to fly, unconscious of all but her presence and his own danger.

In much less time than is required for the telling, he resolved in his mind a hundred recollections connected with the man now so close to him, whose very mention had, from childhood to puberty, been a formidable bane to every pleasurable sensation. Scarcely had he quitted his cradle, and began to walk alone, when the name of Joos Cooperslaugen, "the mountain giant," was the by-word of terror that was rung in his infant ears. This appeal to his fears was never made in vain. The whispered syllables, with a finger held up to caution or threaten the child, were sure to silence his complaining, whether of ill temper or ill health, and he hid his face in the readiest refuge. Joos Cooperslaugen was his father's friend; and though the distance between their residences scarcely allowed them to be neighbours, he often called and sometimes dined at his house, when bursts of his violent temper were not unusual. The voice of this unwelcome visiter, was sure to cause a shudder in the boy; and his appearance across the threshold was invariably followed by the retreat of the latter to some dark shelter, or by his rapid exit from the house. By degrees he became more accustomed to, and less scared at, the "big man of Scarpenberg," another of Joos's familiar appellations; but, even when shame at his own timidity, or a stronger motive still—the strongest of all motives—acted freely and forcibly on his mind, he could never conquer the early dread which the folly of his mother or his nurse, or both, had planted in his infant heart. Many an instance of the effects of this, and some of them

bitterly painful, now rose reflected to the Trappist in memory's officious glass; and his gentle nature was almost agitated into a mental execration of the object which, after a lapse of several years, he once more gazed at and shrunk from. Instead of complying with the rather uncourteous invitation to abandon the shelter of the copse, the Trappist pursued its obstructed path, and after a silence of some time, he replied, in a low voice, that he preferred it to the dust-covered road.

"Very well, Sir, as you like, every man to his fancy, as the burgomaister of Rousbrugge said, when he married his meysthen*—any thing for me but incivility; work your way through the brambles, I will stick to the dust; and we may have some social chat across the hedge, to shorten the road."

The Trappist had many a contending emotion to struggle with. Question upon question pressed towards his lips, but he dared not venture to utter them. He would have asked after his parents, his brother—for the natural feelings of the man were, at the moment, more powerful than those of the recluse, the devotee, the fanatic. He would have mentioned another name, more near to his companion's heart than the name of his old friend; but the risk of betraying himself closed his lips against the utterance of a word, beyond a few common-place remarks on the weather, and these in a tone so timid and obscure, as to create a strong suspicion in the mind of the hasty horseman, that the traveller who so cautiously avoided his observation, must be of a very questionable character. This impression put all his notions of courtesy to a rapid flight, for he was an honest man, who officially hated a rogue; and his plain, rough disposition scorned any appearance of what it was not.

"Hark ye, Sir," said he, in a determined tone, after giving himself a moment's pause, for preparation rather than reflection, and rising high in his stirrups, perhaps to let his huge size be more apparent—"Hark ye, Sir, I thought you suspected me just now of being no better than I should be, so I told you frankly who I was. I now suspect *you* to be worse than you ought to be, and I tell you so without ceremony. No honest traveller skulks in the shade of the evening behind hedges and ditches. The open track is his, as it was yours, a while ago, when you had it all to yourself. It

* A servant girl.

is only for guilt to shrink out of the public way. That is my rule of the road; and the judgment of Joos Cooperslaugen on such a point has never been doubted, I believe. I am overseer and supervisor of this district, and it is my duty to see it kept clear of all suspicious persons. You will therefore tell me, without hesitation, who and what you are."

The Trappist knew the determined character he had to deal with, and was aware of his authority as a public functionary. He was also certain that nothing was more like to send him off than the knowledge of the profession of him whom he questioned, for he had a deep and most irreverent antipathy to monks and mendicants; and as he could not punish them for walking in the public roads, his next resource was to abuse them first, and then fly from them. The answer to his abrupt inquiries was, therefore, as follows.

"Without questioning your official right to ask me who I am—a right which it is my duty to accord to the lowliest peasant—I tell you, Sir, that I am a brother of the order of La Trappe, returning from a mission of alms-seeking for the benefit of our monastery on Catsberg."

"The devil you are! then you are the very man I want." A painful misgiving seemed to sink the Trappist's heart—"the very man, though any other of your tribe would have done as well. I wonder you never paid me a visit at Scarpenberg; but that is nothing to the purpose now. Hard by us here, at Huysenclau's farm, in a house which I have just now left, lies a sick man, who calls out for the aid of a priest, as the doctor has failed him. A friend has tried the procession of the Passion-to-day at Furnes, but the fever is too strong for that—and now, poor fellow, finding himself at the last, and without a chance of life, he wishes to prepare for death. My heart was heavy as I rode along, and sorrow never mends a man's temper: so don't you follow a bad example, and be angry with me, because I was somewhat rude to you; but step across yonder ploughed field to that open gate; you will see a house close by—a hut, rather—go into it fearlessly, if you are not afraid of the fever—but your sanctity protects you from infection, no doubt—tell what you are, and who sent you—you will be well received—and it will be well for him who wants you, if your prayers meet as warm a welcome in Heaven. God grant they may!"

These concluding words were uttered to himself, as if in his own despite. The Trappist gazed at him, as he put spurs

to his mare and galloped off, and could not help being struck, and somewhat affected, by the softened manner of the rough and boisterous man. He heard the involuntary prayer which had escaped him, and it subdued any risng resentment at the sneers which had interlarded his speech. Every personal consideration was in a moment buried deep in his heart. It was filled with fervid anxiety for the object he was so summoned to attend; and he proceeded, at a quick pace, towards the spot indicated by Joos Cooperslaugen.

CHAPTER IV.

From the gate, which he soon reached, the Trappist immediately discerned the dwelling, the only one to be seen in the circuit of dreary landscape visible through the mist. The loaded clouds obscured the rays which the sun still threw above the horizon, beneath which he was sinking, and vapours floated on all sides over the pools and marshes. The cottage, or, as Joos Cooperslaugen had rather disparagingly corrected the appellation, the hut, was situated in a large pasture-ground of many acres extent. The little eminence on which it stood was planted thick with poplars, and a few aquatic trees of the willow tribe drooped down unhealthily into the stagnant ditch that surrounded the whole. A shroud of vapour rose steaming up, as if ready to enfold the hapless tenant of the place; the herds of cattle scattered in the pasture were lowing mournfully, and discordant croakings resounded from every sedge. The Trappist paused for an instant on the weed-covered path that led to the cottage, which appeared, wretched as it was, and sad as was his mission to it, a refuge from the dreariness and melancholy without.

He crossed the narrow plank thrown over the ditch, and approached the half-closed door. He stepped cautiously, but he was heard by those within; and just as he prepared to tap gently for entrance, the white dress of a female appeared at the door, which slowly opened, and displayed to the Trappist the face and form of her whom he least thought

of meeting—it was Melanie that stood before him. She was pale and agitated; and evidently did not recognise the visiter, on whom she cast a look at once inquiring and fearful.

A pang of surprise seemed to transfix the Trappist to the spot. He could not fly, as he had done a few hours before. He was now stunned by the recurrence of the vision which had then affected him so acutely. He was incapable of motion or speech, and for a moment or two, sensation itself seemed paralyzed. He gazed at her with an expression which was rendered more intense by the terrifying doubt that the scene before him was the creation of his over excited brain. The faint twilight, and the shade of the cottage, which fell upon and almost concealed him, secured his emotion from self-betrayal; and the brief space of this inaction sufficed to rally his thoughts, to convince him that what he saw was no mockery, and to give birth to many an abortive surmise, as to the events which brought him so close to the being whom, of all others, he was most desirous to shun. She, the agitated Melanie, fatigued, and trembling from mixed emotions, little knew at the time the person whose embarrassed silence so added to her other alarms. She at length falteringly addressed him, and inquired his business.

It were difficult to describe the effect produced on the Trappist by the sound of the voice which syllabled the words of that inquiry. Who has not felt the thrill caused by the faintest tone of a being once, and for ever, dear to the heart? And who needs be told of the throbbings it sends through that heart, like the vibrations of a lake on which the lightest leaf has fallen? The Trappist trembled as he listened to Melanie's twice-uttered question. Her voice seemed to speak the thoughts of years gone by; and it called up the instantaneous and confused remembrance of sensations that could never again exist. But he was still alive to the propriety, the necessity of resisting the influence of the past. He only wished for strength to escape the fascination which threatened to enthral him. With this hope he conceived the instant project of breaking away from the spot, feeling, through his agitation, that even the abandonment of a fellow Christian to an unshrined death was venial, in comparison with risking the breach of his sworn renouncement of all that might lead to enjoyment or temptation.

He therefore prepared to withdraw, and had he done so,

abruptly and silently, he had escaped discovery and all its consequences. Safely screened by the shadows of the cottage, he ventured in his abstraction to address to Melanie a sentence of apology for his intrusion, not supposing that she would have recognised his voice, though he felt that *her* very whisper would have been to him a piercing sound through all the united discords of the world. But his want *of* self-confidence, and freedom from self-opinion, had in this instance deceived him. No sooner did he speak his first confused words of courtesy, than Melanie, with simultaneous movement and utterance, sprang forward, clasped him in her arms, and exclaimed, through a half-suppressed scream of joy,

"It is, it is you, Ernest! It *was* then your voice that struck my ear and pierced my heart this evening, like a sound from the grave—and you are now with me once again! And you are indeed alive and well, and returned to us all—to those who have so long mourned you as lost to them for ever! Come in, come in—but oh, God, where do I ask you to come! No, no, Ernest, you must not enter here. Can it, can it be you that I hold in my arms? Oh, speak to me again, dear Ernest, and tell me that all this is not a dream!"

Ernest Vandersteen, for so we must now call our young Trappist, listened to this burst of Melanie's tenderness—saw the tears that bedewed her cheek—felt the gentle pressure of her arms—and trembled like a child in the grasp of a giant. He scarcely knew what he said, or would have said, but he spoke.

"And is this *you*, Melanie, again—a second time raised up before me? By what magic are you here, in this wretched place? Why did your father send me here to find *you?* He spoke of a dying man, who—"

"Oh, do not say dying, Ernest—his life is still in the hands of Heaven."

"Who is the sick man, Melanie? Is it Nicholas? It must be he. Is Nicholas dying?"

"No, Heaven be praised, he is well; but, Ernest, what ails you and agitates you in this frightful way? Why do you smile so wildly, and tremble so fearfully? This is *not* Ernest—you are not he—leave me—let me enter the house." But she could not escape the convulsive embrace that strained her to his breast. Her reply to his inquiries—her doubts of his identity—her anxious questioning, were all unheard,

and he incoherently spoke again, still holding her firmly clasped.

"Is he *dying*—your father said he was? *Is* Nicholas dying?"

"He is well, he is well. In mercy loose this desperate hold. If indeed you *are* Ernest, take pity on me—you terrify me—Nicholas is not ill—your brother, my husband, is not ill."

"Brother—husband—true, true! What am I about? What madness is this? And you! Melanie! Gracious Heavens, what fiendish notion flashed across me? Not Nicholas? Thank Heaven, thank Heaven! Now then to the death-bed duty—I am quite ready."

With the rapid enunciation of these broken sentences, he had released Melanie from his wild embrace; and he abruptly pushed open the door of the cottage, which she had cautiously closed, unheeding the faint effort which she made to prevent his entrance. Alarmed at his whole air and conduct, which she attributed to insanity, she followed him in.

He passed rapidly through the empty room which first received him, and thence into an inside closet which contained a bed. In this he perceived the sick man lying; while a woman sat beside, and appeared in an attitude of deep watchfulness. The solemn sadness of the scene acted promptly and powerfully on the half-distracted Trappist, and he advanced with gentle steps to the bedside. The woman rose at his approach—the sick man raised his head—Ernest threw his looks from one to the other alternately; and leaning for support upon a table beside him, he groaned deeply, and exclaimed in a hollow murmur,

"God of heaven, can this be? My father, my mother, what can this mean? Can it, can it be so?"

The altered voice and dimly revealed features were in a moment acknowledged by the mother as those of her long mourned and favourite child. She rose from her chair, and in an excess of parental joy, loudly pronounced his name, and covered him with caresses, forgetful of the danger which the shock of his abrupt appearance might bring to his suffering and nearly exhausted father. But the latter felt no sudden emotion. The nerves were too much shattered, and nature too nearly worn out, to be capable of receiving a shock. The announcement of his son's return and presence was plainly understood by the once sturdy farmer, who, in

former days, would have bounded with boisterous joy at the happy news; but who now calmly looked his consciousness of it with listless indifference. Indeed, all worldly feelings seemed extinct in him. He threw his eyes upwards, and looked as if towards heaven; and he murmured, in anxious and even fretful fervour,

"Oh, send me a priest! must I perish in want of holy consolation?"

These words, uttered in a tone of such despondency, made Ernest shudder. He could no longer doubt the evidence of his senses, bewildering as was the conviction which they brought to him. It was indeed his mother, whose woe-stricken countenance was before him—his father, who was the occupant of the bed that seemed too wretched for even death to make his own. Those parents, so dear to *him*, whom he had abandoned with such anguish, in the *full* possession of wealth and health, now reduced to the depths of poverty, and one of them to the verge of the grave! Yet he saw it was so—and the time did not serve for inquiry as to the cause. His father's call for a priest was the most stirring excitement to his feelings; and gently disengaging himself from his mother's embrace, he sunk on *his knees* by the bedside, and in a voice, at first half choked *with* emotion, but gradually recovering its wonted fulness and power, he cried—"My dear father, your call is not in vain—Heaven has hearkened to your prayers—and I, your child, justly punished and agonized by witnessing your sufferings, am mercifully allowed to be your solace in this awful hour. I, dearest father, am a priest, the lowliest servant of Heaven, the least worthy member of our holy church; and I invite you, in the name of that church, by the sanction of that Heaven, to repose your weary spirit, and pour forth the fulness of your heart in confession and prayer."

Astonishment was depicted on the faces of the listeners to these words, but a feeling of deep respect, excited by the sanctity of the speaker's tone and manner, kept down the expression of surprise, which struggled for utterance with both his mother and Melanie. The first threw up her wondering eyes towards heaven, while Melanie stood, with clasped hands, and looks that seemed to speak a still more heartfelt joy than could be excited by the mere accomplishment of the old man's wish. He, the object most interested in Ernest's avowal of his holy calling, wore a mingled look of eagerness

and doubt upon his haggard features. Ernest observed this expression, and to remove at once the skepticism which gave it birth, he bowed down his head, so as to expose the shaven mark upon his crown, though to avoid a too evident singularity he had suffered his hair to grow again, on the other parts of his head.

"See, father, see here the humble mark of my profession—place your hand on the tonsure which denotes my sacred office"—and the sick man's shrunken arm was extended, and his fingers felt on the Trappist's low-bowed head, as Isaac sought for evidence of his son's identity—but the modern parent was not, like the Hebrew sire, deceived.

"May Heaven bless my child!" feebly, but with an air of pious conviction, uttered the old man. And Ernest, catching the words, and feeling the weak, yet thrilling pressure of the hand that still rested on his head, could not resist the unpriestly thought, that he never was truly consecrated until then. Both the female witnesses were deeply awed and affected at the scene. Melanie sobbed audibly; while the prayers and thanksgivings of the mother spoke at once her gratitude to Heaven, and her mingled pride and reverence for her son. An expressive look from the old man, and a mild suggestion from Ernest, caused the weeping women to retire; and the door was closed upon this solemn, and, perhaps, unparalleled instance, of a repentant father laying bare the deepest secrets of his heart, before the absolving authority of his son.

The sanctity of faith, in both communicant and clergyman, covers such scenes with a veil, which even those who condemn the rite would hesitate to raise. The confession of Martin Vandersteen was, therefore, inviolate in the bosom of his child; but the character of the penitent was too commonplace and unmarked to have engendered any but such every day failings, as the priest might conscientiously have pardoned.

CHAPTER V.

Melanie and her mother-in-law had scarcely retired into the outer room, their reverential feelings towards the scene that passed within keeping them silent, when Nicholas Vandersteen, the son and husband, Ernest's elder and only brother, hurriedly entered the cottage. He was flushed and fatigued, and had evidently put forth his utmost speed; but he entered on tiptoe, and his whispered inquiries for his father were answered as cautiously by his wife. She acknowledged, in his solicitude for his parent, and in the hoarse muttering of the approaching thunder, sufficient reasons for the haste which had urged him toward home, and without questioning him as to the cause, she quickly recounted the extraordinary appearance of Ernest, and explained his sacred occupation at the time.

At any other moment Nicholas would have shown more surprise and more pleasure at this unlooked-for intelligence; but an absorbing anxiety pressed on him, and left him little power for the susceptibility of these feelings, and less for their utterance. He displayed, however, just enough to prevent the betrayal of what he strove to conceal, though fearful that a very short time must make his painful secret known. He looked anxiously from the window of the room, having carefully fastened the doors of the dwelling; and while he was thus occupied, the Trappist slowly came forward from his father's little chamber. The spirit of piety seemed to beam from his face, which Melanie could now fearlessly look into, and acknowledge as that which in years of young endearment she had so often and so innocently gazed on. All the tumult of its late expression had died away in the performance of his sacred functions; and he wore, for the moment, his own wonted look of pure and undisturbed devotion. But his eye fell upon the form of Nicholas, who still anxiously watched at the window, and he involuntarily started, and shrunk back—and when his brother turned round and stepped forward to embrace him, his face and forehead glowed deeply, as though his heart had sent up a rush of evidence to pro-

claim his self-accusal. But Nicholas had no suspicion that his brother's embrace was less cordial than his own, and Ernest himself was scarcely sensible of the check which an over-sensitive conscience gave to the impulse of natural affection.

The looks of all were now directed toward the bed within; and the invalid was seen placidly lying, his hands clasped on his breast, his eyes closed, an expression of profound contentment overspreading his face, and the motion of his lips alone giving proof that he still lived and prayed fervently. The anxious watchers, taking advantage of this tranquil and comparatively happy state, entered into a hurried interchange of inquiry and explanation as to the events of the five years which had elapsed since they had last been together, in the midst of festivity, and feasting, and enjoyment to which there was but small exception on the wedding-day of Nicholas and Melanie.

A brief recital told Ernest of all the accumulated ills that had fallen on his family since that day, the auspicious opening of which was blasted by his immediate disappearance from his home and friends. The total ignorance of his fate had been ever since accompanied by successive misfortune; and ruin and disease had finally brought death within arms' length of the chief victim. Failure of crops, mortality among cattle, and a desolating flood, that swept the country for leagues around, were the main evils against which Martin Vandersteen was fated to contend. His superior knowledge of farming, his activity, and fortitude, made a long stand, but ill health bore him down; then it was that grief for the loss of his beloved child threw itself, unresisted, on his prostrate spirit, which gradually sunk with the worn-out frame it dwelt in; until that hour when, by almost miraculous coincidence, the child returned, as if on Heaven's own mission, to smooth the track that led to his parent's grave.

But all this wretchedness was not without its consolations. A faithful and untiring wife watched by the sick bed, and ever threw herself to meet the assaults of ill luck, and soften their asperity ere they reached the mark. Melanie and her husband, who had, ever since their marriage, lived with her father, quitted the comforts of his residence in the valley at the foot of Scarpenberg, and following the fate of poor Vandersten and his wife, accompanied them from refuge to refuge, when they were driven abroad by merciless creditors;

and had for some weeks been with them in this lonely and wretched dwelling, situated on a farm of Joos Cooperslaugen, which, many leagues distant from their once happy home, and from his neighbourhood, promised a safe retreat against immediate pursuit.

And Joos Cooperslaugen himself, coarse, harsh, and violent as he was, proved, on this occasion, what redeeming virtues Nature can bestow on the sternest men. Of the many others of Vandersteen's *friends* (to use the parlance of the world), some stood aloof, feigned to have never received his application for relief, or found for refusal ample excuses to satisfy themselves. Others, slightly contributing to his wants, or coldly interfering with some claimant, rose on the poor advantage of having conferred a favour, and presumed, under cover of affected kindness, to censure, to sneer at, and insult, when they were only called on to do a service or be silent. The burthen of *such* obligations was too great for the sufferer's gratitude, and he at once cursed the ill-luck, and loathed the meanness which combined together against him. But Joos Cooperslaugen formed a fine contrast to this mass of every-day littleness. He came forward unsolicited; put his hand in his purse as far as it could *in* prudence go; met the creditors of his friend; soothed when he could not satisfy them; upheld the honour of the absent man against the insolent impeachment of his persecutors; defended his interests, sympathized with his feelings, and relieved his wants; and when he could fairly do no more—when justice closed the hand that generosity would still have held open, he did not abandon the friend he could no longer serve, but continued to pour forth a fund of feeling more precious than all the minted riches of the realm.

Ernest, for his part, had but a short tale to tell, and he curtailed it still, by suppressing all allusion to the motives of his flight from home. He only stated his entrance into a monastery; the long day of monotonous seclusion, of which months and years formed the divisions; his office of almoner; his last tour of collection; his presence at the procession at Furnes; and his chance meeting with Melanie's father. When he spoke of his employment as a begging brother of his order, his mother showed an attention more acute than during any other part of his short recital. She inquired if he carried the produce of his last collection on his person, and when he unhesitatingly answered that he did, and

mentioned its amount, frankly but not boastingly, she repeated his words, with an emphasis which he did not rightly comprehend.

In a few minutes more the old woman went carefully into the sick room. Shutting herself in with her sorrowful employment, she resumed her place at the bedside, watching the countenance of the patient, who now calmly slept. Nicholas, on some pretext, left the hut, the door of which he closed after him, and Ernest was left alone with Melanie, both retaining the seats they had occupied during the explanatory recital before alluded to.

Placed thus alone, their sensations were widely different. Ernest, in the worldly and personal explanations that had just taken place, felt as if abandoned by the spirit of religion that had so lately rested upon him. He no longer knew the excitement which seemed to lift him above earth, when he knelt by his father's side, and spoke the words of what he felt to be inspiration, and which consequently was so *to him*. He was now, as it were, replunged into mere mortality; and the sensation excited by the presence of the innocent being beside him, was, fear *of* her, and *for* himself. A man even practised in the ways of the world might have been embarrassed in such a situation; but to one like Ernest it was utterly overwhelming, and he was at once the sport of every conflicting feeling. Melanie, on the contrary, experienced a total relief from the apprehensions caused by Ernest's manner on their meeting at the door of the cottage. His avowal of his calling, the visible evidences of it, his whole bearing while in the actual discharge of its duties, threw a sacredness around him, which raised him, in her eyes, above the level of human weakness; and the conduct, which in its action so startled and surprised her, appeared now, in the weakness of reflection, accordant with the character of one superior to the common usages and general responsibility of men.

Melanie's was a mind as simple as it was pure. She possessed all the blind reverence given to their priests by the greater portion of her sex, in priest-ridden countries. But affection for Ernest mingling with respect for his office, her immediate feeling towards him was free, without becoming familiar. She held him in awe, but not in dread. During his long disappearance she had shuddered, in common with all his friends, in the apprehension of death, or some ter-

rible misfortune, having been his lot. When, therefore, she heard from his own lips the happy solution of the mystery in which he had shrouded himself, her delight was without bounds. She longed for the moment when she could freely converse with him on the subject of his flight from home, enter at large into the interchange of sentiments and feelings, and fully open her heart, under the guarantee and sanction of his holiness. That moment had now arrived; and Melanie, without reserve or scruple, availed herself of it.

"Oh, Ernest," said she, and she inclined towards him as she spoke, "what a day of mixed sensations is this! Oh, tell me, how it is that the heart can beat at the same time with such opposite feelings—with grief and joy—despair and delight! Our poor father, even in his hopeless state, joins I am sure in all this—then how must I feel it, dear Ernest! and what happiness to tell you what I feel—to speak to you as I think—to communicate with you without restraint—and this for the first time in my life!"

"The *first* time, Melanie?" said Ernest, with an involuntary sigh, as his mind flew back to the day-spring of life, when he thought that Melanie's heart was as open to him as the sky above their heads, or the romantic paths of the valley in which they wandered together.

"Yes, yes, indeed it is the first time, Ernest; for, strange as it may seem, I never felt towards you as fearless and unrestrained as on this day. During our early intimacy, although you were but a boy, and I a heedless girl, there was a something, I knew not what, that made me shrink from you, even when I liked you most. But now that you are a priest and I a married woman, I possess a confidence that I never before knew: I feel as if called upon to confess to you—not crimes but feelings—and that I ought to avow to you what I would never before acknowledge to myself—how very much I loved you."

"That is a strong word, Melanie—loved me?"

"Oh, yes, better than all the world!"

"What! better than Nicholas? better than my brother?"

"Oh, yes, yes—I may surely say it now, without shame or sin. Had you not been a priest, or I been married, I never could have said it; but it seems to take a weight off my heart, and is it not right that *you* should know that heart truly at last?"

Her quickened respiration, and blushing cheeks, were

eloquent tokens of her emotion, and the almost visible boundings of the heart, which she described, testified its freedom from the pressure that secrecy had laid upon it. But not satisfied with her own feeling of this, she took the hand of her silent, but deeply agitated companion, and placed it on her side.

"Feel my heart, Ernest—oh, feel it. Does it not bound lightly? Never, never have I known it to do since the last time we walked together up the side of Scarpenberg: the day that Nicholas asked me to marry him, and I ran out and told you, and you caught me in your arms and were so surprised. But it beat then with fright, I think, but now it is with happiness."

The unresisting hand of the priest was placed over Melanie's heart, and both hand and heart perhaps stirred with reciprocal attraction; for the pressure of the one, and the throbbing of the other, seemed too electrical for the guileless pair, and they mutually recoiled, as if instinctive propriety had felt itself warned in each. But with the removal of Ernest's hand, Melanie was released from all restraint, for it was through the medium of the senses alone that her moral feelings had been momentarily affected. Her thoughts were pure and calm, and no words were uttered by Ernest to discolour or disturb them.

As for him, his priesthood had not the power to unman him, nor did his contact with holiness act a miracle on his mortality. He was innocent, but not insensible; and he possessed, in common with his species, feelings which fanaticism calls *sin*, but which are not so in themselves, for to become sin they must be indulged. When restrained they are component parts of virtue, which is but a mixture of temptation and resistance. They are, however, for the wise purposes of nature inflicted on all men, and Ernest had his share. But they had hitherto lain dormant and concealed, and it was now to be proved whether in him they were meant to lead to good or evil. Melanie's words were fraught with powerful interest to the Trappist. He was scarcely aware of the act of placing his hand to feel the pulsation of her heart; but his turbulent sensations soon brought a consciousness at once painful and ecstatic.

"What words are you speaking, Melanie? and why do I listen to them? You recall scenes and revive feelings that should be forgotten."

"Forgotten, Ernest! Oh, no—they ought not, at least they *cannot*, be forgotten by *me;* and you do not look as if you wished to forget them. They were the happiest of my life, the only really happy ones till *now*, and now I am almost as happy as ever—more so I believe;" and as she spoke, her arm lay gently upon Ernest's shoulder. He took her hand in his, and, drawing closer to her than before, he said with an air of mild reproach,

"Well, well, then, Melanie, since you must be indulged, answer me truly the only question I will trust myself with. Why did you conceal your love from me? Why leave me to suppose you indifferent to the passion—what do I say!—to the friendship—the affection—the friendly affection you had inspired me with? Tell me why!"

"Indifferent! Indeed, Ernest, I never thought you cared more for me than in common regard you might. You never told me so. It was your place to speak. Wasn't it?"

"I never *spoke* it, indeed—I never told it in mere *words*, Melanie; but my thoughts must have made themselves known to you. My ardent affection—my respect—my despair at your acceptance of Nicholas—all this must have found utterance, though it had no tongue."

"So help me Heaven, Ernest, I was ignorant of it all! Had I ventured to believe it, could I have become the wife of another—of your own brother! Oh, no—the world could not ——"

"No more, no more, Melanie—another word and we are lost! Fool that I was—my cowardice has been my ruin! I dared not tell *you* what I felt—and your father, Melanie—I now reveal it for the first time—your father spurned me, scorned my proposal, and scoffed at what he called my boyish presumption. He had, in fact, given his sanction to my brother's offers—and *he* had made them without deigning to imagine the possibility of my intending the same. *Thus* it was that I lost the happiness which I now learn was within my reach; and when do I learn it? where? and from whom? Fool that I was—madman that I am—what thoughts am I indulging in—what language do I hold! Heaven pity and pardon me—I know not what I say or do. This is too much for me."

"Oh, Ernest, Ernest, speak not, look not so! This is not fitting you—have you not renounced all feelings that should lead to this? Forgive me, forgive me! Little did I dream

of causing you an instant's pain. I am a weak, foolish girl still, as you left me years ago, Ernest; oh, then, forgive me! I never dreamed of this—I knew not that you ever had those feelings, and little thought that a priest could entertain them, and for his sister, too. I hoped to make you as happy as I was myself—but I am a criminal and unfortunate wretch! Oh, then, do forgive me!"

"Sweetest and most innocent," cried Ernest, in a tone of passionate tenderness, "cease to torture yourself. Be happy, be still happy in that innocence—and think no more of me. Too late I see what I have lost—too deeply feel the loss—too desperately deplore it! I *might* have been, then, all that my young affections sighed for! Alas, alas, Melanie, this is indeed misfortune! I have lost the only object that earth held of value, irretrievably lost it—and I abhor my craven heart that feared to take what Heaven meant to be its own. When I dared not dream of your loving me, I had power to combat my misery, for wounded pride was strong—when I saw you snatched from me for ever, the open bosom of religion seemed to invite me to repose; but now that all is revived anew—that I feel the fire burst forth which has been so long concealed and consuming, what refuge is left for my despair? Religion will reject me—I violate even now her mandates—I am false to my duties—recreant to my oaths—rejected of my faith!—but *this*, this is supreme bliss; and, suffer as I may on earth, I will, I must take this foretaste of Heaven."

During this speech the Trappist held Melanie in his arms. His latter words were interrupted by the repeated and passionate kisses which he poured upon her. His lips were pressed to hers, and the pressure returned through floods of tears which had burst forth when she ceased to speak. The delirium of the moment caused every thing to be forgotten. Father, mother, danger, guilt, *self*, and its thousand associations, ceased to exist for Ernest and Melanie—and they stood in each other's embrace, until roused by the sound of rapid footsteps, close to the outer door, which was quickly burst open by Nicholas, whose whole frame shook with agitation. The pair so miraculously saved from a danger, the extent of which they knew not, in the instinctive impulse of self-preservation loosened their enfolded arms, and sunk on the seats which, in their forgetfulness, they had quitted.

As soon as Nicholas entered, he securely bolted the door; and then, in half-suppressed and hurried tones, he said,

"Well, Melanie, the worst is at last arrived—my suspicions were too well founded! You were observed in the procession to-day by the harpies who have so long sought our retreat. In the house to which I carried you, some of our incautious words were overheard—we mentioned my father, and the wretches have never since lost sight of us. When I left you on the road and went towards Rousbrugge to seek the doctor again, I saw that I was watched. Now all is confirmed. Four bailiffs are entering the pasture, with a cart to convey our poor father to jail. What is to be done? Can we conceal him? To remove him would be his death."

Melanie could make no reply. She strove to speak, but her tongue clove to her palate. She would have risen, but her trembling limbs refused their office. She wept no more. The sources of speech and motion, and even of tears, seemed at once and indissolvably congealed. Ernest reclined upon his chair, and covered his face with his hands. He appeared for a moment insensible to his brother's words; and Nicholas continued:

"Come, come, Melanie, rouse yourself! Ernest, there is no use now in giving way to grief: we must all exert ourselves. Come, come, give me your advice—what can we do to conceal our father? His life is at stake."

The emphasis laid upon the last words produced an immediate effect. Both Ernest and Melanie rose quickly, and, by a prompt transition of thought and feeling, their minds were wholly turned aside from all that had just absorbed them. The danger to their unfortunate parent produced a shock which overpowered every other emotion, crushing, for a while, even the giant force of passion. They sprang to the closet door, as if the first impulse was to fling themselves as a barrier before it; but Nicholas, with more command of himself, and not unprepared for the occasion, looked for better means of security. His first thought was to remove his father to the loft above, make his mother occupy the bed within, and thus lead the bailiffs to believe their prey had escaped. With this view he opened the door, and seeing that his father still lay calmly unconscious of the coming peril, he beckoned his mother from her place

of watching. It was a delicate task to break the calamitous news to her; and Nicholas was not the best qualified for such a task, for he had been too long in contact with the rudeness of Joos Cooperslaugen, and had a too natural tendency to copy it. He, however, explained how matters stood, in the gentlest phrase which his nature and the urgency of the case allowed. The mother received the communication with a calmness that surprised her children. She opposed Nicholas's plan of removing her husband; and when he urged the necessity of that only chance of avoiding the misfortune which must otherwise befall them, she answered with words and looks, the drift of which none of them understood,

"Be it so, my son: what is decreed must happen. I have been long prepared for the worst. It has come at last, and if there is a change it must be for the better. Wait patiently, and fate will take its course. Heaven has foredoomed the events of this day, and I feel that relief is at hand. But to gather the fruit we must not break down the branch. Let Providence work out its own ways!"

Having uttered these words, she quietly sat down, looking towards the window, and piously crossing herself, and muttering a prayer when the lightning flashed, and the thunder pealed loudly above the cottage. But Nicholas persevered in his intention of active resistance. Moving into his father's little chamber, he was alarmed by the whispering of strange voices; and to his astonishment and grief he saw that two men had already entered by the window, while a third was following their steps. Nicholas, overlooking all consideration but those prompted by his natural boldness of heart, sprang on the intruders, and was immediately engaged in a desperate contest. The bailiffs, being satisfied as to the helplessness, and consequent security, of their prey, turned their whole force against their daring assailant; and soon overpowering him, they dragged him into the outer room, amidst all the confusion of his own imprecations, Melanie's screams, the groans of the disturbed sufferer, and the united prayers and entreaties of Ernest and his mother. While two of the fellows held Nicholas, fiercely struggling, on the ground, the third opened the door for the admission of one, who seemed, by his air of superior ruffianism, the leader of the party. He had remained outside in the safe charge of the horse and cart, while his satellites assailed the

house. They were only armed with bludgeons, but their chief immediately produced a pistol, which he swore he would discharge at random into the group before him, if Nicholas made another effort at resistance. This threat, and his exhaustion, produced an obedience which danger to himself could not have gained; and the head bailiff produced and read aloud his warrant and authorities, for the seizure and lodgment in jail of Martin Vandersteen, at the suit of a petty creditor, for the sum of a few hundred florins—with all the clogging technicalities that are meant, no doubt, to give dignity to such missives.

Ernest listened calmly to this performance, and then, avowing himself to be a priest, commenced a strain of religious remonstrance, and implored the forbearance of the official wretch, picturing his father's desperate and almost dying state, and dwelling on the impious violation of the Sabbath which was about to be committed. But the bailiff had no understanding for considerations of piety or pity. He scoffed at both; and pushing aside the Trappist, with irreverent force, exclaimed—

"Hark ye, mister priest, if you are one, which I very much doubt, I do not want your preaching. I came here for another purpose—I must have my man—his body must be mine—and dead or alive is all one to me. As to violating the Sabbath, I have a special order, and therefore there is no impiety in the case—the law is the law, and makes Sunday just as good a day as Saturday, or Monday either. So no farther hindrance to the discharge of my duty, do ye see, or I'll have you all indicted for a rescue—every one, men, women, or priests, or whatever the devil you may be; —let me pass, I say, to seize the body."

Ernest, stunned and stupified by this ferocity, shrunk as the speaker passed by him; and at the instant, his mother, who had anxiously listened to and watched him, flung herself upon him, and spoke—

"Oh, Ernest, Ernest, my child, can you farther bear that this should go on? Can you see your father dragged dying from his bed, with the means of saving him in your hands? You have money about you—more than enough for this demand—it is the money of charity, and how could charity be better applied than in saving your parent? Heaven sent you here expressly provided with the means to avert this calamity. Believe it, my son—it must be so—do not hesi-

tate.—Oh, Ernest, in the name of Heaven, listen to your mother!"

The moment that Ernest caught the meaning of his mother's first words, he felt a pang of terror and affliction. His hand instinctively grasped the secret pocket where the money raised by his collection was secured. The blood suffered a revulsion in all parts of his frame, and he shook in every joint. None of his late emotions were equal to this, for no mixture of enjoyment now softened the shock. His mother's voice sounded like the summons of some fiend, tempting him to the commission of a sacrilege. His oaths of fidelity to his trust,—the wants of his brethren—the sacredness of the funds which he held—the curse of the church on him who dared to misapply its rights—the eternal punishment of the perjured violator of its laws—all rose before him, in a confounding chaos of evil, past, present, and to come.

"Ernest, Ernest," cried his mother, "a minute more and it will be too late. Oh, God! they are lifting him from the bed.—Oh, Nicholas, Melanie, speak to this hard-hearted man! He is not my son—he is not my once-loved Ernest—yet speak to him—speak to him—for I can do no more!"

She tottered into the closet, where the bailiffs had actually commenced to raise their victim from the bed, and she caught them in her arms with loud cries of mercy. Nicholas, still held on the ground, gnashed his teeth, and furiously uttered reproaches and imprecations; while Melanie threw herself on her knees, and seizing Ernest by the coat, exclaimed,

"Ernest, I call on you, in the name of Heaven! Oh, God! listen to your father's groans—see, they drag him out—listen again—Heaven and nature speak to you, and command you to prevent your parent's murder! Look at him, Ernest, I cannot—I cannot!"

At this moment the bailiff came forward, dragging the screaming wife, who clung to him with desperate strength, and embarrassed his movements. He carried high in his clasped arms the once robust form of Vandersteen, now dwindled to a skeleton figure. The victim, thus forced along writhed and struggled, and a hideous expression of suffering glared from his face. At Melanie's exclamation, Ernest involuntarily cast his eyes to the door of the closet, and this spectacle met his gaze. Melanie still clung to him in an

attitude of entreaty; and he sprang forward, and violently tore open his secret pocket from the breast of his coat, produced the leathern purse which contained the whole sum of his collection, caught with one hand the arm of the bailiff, with the other poured the money on the table, and mechanically thrust back the empty purse into his pocket; then, without uttering a word, he snatched his father from the bailiff's arms, and lifting him in his own, he tottered back to the closet, and sank on the bed, still held in the fast embrace of *the corpse*—for the last convulsive struggle of Martin Vandersteen was this death-grasp clinging to the neck of his child.

The unconscious widow dropped on both knees, and with hysteric utterance, poured blessings and praises on the son, who had, as she thought, saved his father! Melanie stood with clasped hands, in silent emotion at the scene. Nicholas, at length released by the wretches to whom the sight of Ernest's money was a warrant of freedom, sprang lightly on his feet again; and raising his mother, and taking Melanie by the arm, they proceeded to follow Ernest to the closet, leaving the chief bailiff counting the money, *which his* practised eye had at once acknowledged as more *than* enough to cover his claim.

Ernest laid his dismal burthen on the bed, gently disengaged himself from the close-locked arms which encircled his neck; and as he bent over the body, a vivid flash of lightning broke through the dusky twilight, and showed him the fixed and death-struck features of what had been his father.

The look of death speaks a language of terrible veracity. It may not be counterfeited nor mistaken. Ernest read the truth with one glance. A convulsive shriek burst from him —and he sprang upwards, rushed past the group that blocked the entrance to the closet, bounded across the outer room, and through the open door, followed by a yell of laughter from the bailiffs, who were grouped round the table, reckoning their ill gotten booty.

Nicholas, still ignorant of the sad catastrophe, left his mother and wife to give their aid to his too tardily rescued father, and hurried after Ernest, shocked at his frantic air. He overtook him just as he had cleared the plank that crossed the moat, and seizing him round the waist, he implored him in a few words to return to the cottage. But

Ernest wrenched himself from his brother's embrace, and in a voice of frantic rage, exclaimed,

"Back, back, hateful wretch! Leave me to the fate which you have brought upon me. I have robbed my brethren—murdered my father—ruined the peace of her I adored:—thanks to whom? I am covered with crime—Heaven is ready to blast me—hell yawns for me—listen to the laughing fiends! Who has made me what I am? Who thrusts himself between me and the bliss that was my own? Who follows me to the edge of the abyss? You, you! Leave me then to my despair."

"Ernest, for all our sakes, for your mother's, your poor father's, Melanie's ——"

"Monster! dare you to mock my misery!" Uttering these frantic words, Ernest raised his hand, and with a force that seemed more than his own, he struck a blow upon his brother's head that felled him to the earth. He then ran headlong into the gloom, his desperate path lighted at times by the glaring flashes of the storm, and feeling as though the curse of Cain were seared on his throbbing brow.

Nicholas rose unhurt, and would have still pursued the poor fugitive, had he not been recalled to the cottage by the piercing screams of the women, which told him the tale of death.

CHAPTER VI.

At the very time that these distressing scenes were taking place, Joos Cooperslaugen, having been safely carried home by his valuable, though sometimes restive mare, was seated snugly before his own kitchen fire. But ere he betook himself to the refuge of his huge and well-stuffed elbow-chair, he saw that the partner of his rapid return from Huysenclaus was well cleaned, fed, and bedded in the stable which she exclusively occupied, apart from the coarser animals of the farm. Joos then proceeded to disencumber himself of his jack-boots, and his other riding habiliments. He next ordered Micha, his faithful maid, to place upon the table his pipe and leaden tobacco-canister, his pint-measure drinking

glass, and a pewter vessel containing a *litre*, filled from a cask of Madame Vermoot's brewing, at "the Tulip," in the village hard by. Thus provided, the honest farmer and overseer of the roads sat down to his lonely indulgence, listened to the storm that rioted through the glen, and drank a frothing bumper towards the better health of his old friend, at the very moment in which poor Vandersteen heaved his dying gasp!

Joos Cooperslaugen was a man of hope, who never despaired, set a bold face against fortune, and held ill luck and the fever in scorn. In short, he had strong nerves, and no superabundance of bile. He had not, therefore, quite given up his friend, notwithstanding what he said to the Trappist. While he was by the sick man's bedside, and saw his suffering and exhaustion, he could not resist their influence, and he thought the case a bad one. But embedded in the seat and sides of his arm-chair, warmed by the fire (which in the damp valley was always in season,) dozed with strong ale, and enveloped in tobacco-smoke, he took a different view of things. He began to grow skeptical as to the existence of what he had half believed in, and wondered *how* people could be so weak as to give way to illness, *or create* misfortunes, by imagining themselves unfortunate. So that by the time he shook the ashes out of his fourth pipe, and threw the dregs of his fourth glass into the fire, Joos Cooperslaugen had no memory for the evils of life; and sat in a quiet doze of self-contentment and good will towards all mankind.

His old *vrowe*, a strong-built, dumpy little woman, who had many a year's experience of her master's ways, was as regular as clockwork in her duties. She knew to a minute the time he took to disqualify the *litre*; and was never out in her reckoning as to the fit moment for replenishment. In the intervals of this duty she used to sit nodding on the rush-bottomed chair, which, to suit her stature, had suffered amputation in all its members, and rested on the stumps of its wooden legs in a corner of the chimney. Thus placed, she formed a sort of substantial shadow to every movement of her master; and while appearing to sleep, she watched him from under her half-closed lids, and, by acute observation of his habits, was ready to anticipate every wish. She often surprised her master by this species of divination; for he, like many a wiser man, was ignorant of the treacherous

way in which looks and motions anticipate words about to be spoken, and betray thoughts that are meant to be concealed. He never calculated that his forefinger being buried up to the second joint in the bowl of his pipe, told a tale of emptiness to Vrowe Micha, just as sure as if she had felt the void; nor was he aware of his invariable trick of smacking his lips, and wiping them with his hand, *before* he drank—thus reversing the natural and very cleanly custom of ale-drinkers in general. These, and many such signals, unconsciously telegraphed his wishes, which the ready *vrowe* replied to incontinent; and at the time alluded to, about a page ago, (if such reckoning be admissible,) when old Joos had despatched his fourth pipe and fourth pint, Micha started from her lowly seat, and shuffling across to a corner press, took out the remnant of an Antwerp ham, a loaf of bread, some cheese and butter, and placed them on the table.

"Why, what the devil are you about, Micha?" said her master, rather gruffly, but with a look at the repast that spoke him "nothing loth."

"You are hungry, ar'n't you?" said she, giving him question for question.

"Yes, I am—but how did you know it? I did not tell you so?"

"No, but I *thought* you were," answered the *vrowe*. But she might have honestly said she *knew* it; for she could not misconstrue the farmer's constant habit of rubbing his broad and brawny palm over the surface of those regions where the appetetic action, in a healthy man, becomes pleasantly importunate about three times a-day.

"I'll tell you what, Micha," exclaimed Joos, mechanically putting his finger into his unfilled pipe, "this sort of knowledge of my thoughts, which you certainly have, somehow or another, acquired, is convenient enough now and then; but it is, after all, a devil of a disappointment not to have occasion sometimes to say what one wants. There now, why do you put that canister close to my elbow? couldn't you wait till I asked you for it?"

"I thought you would like another pipe," said Micha, drily.

"Ay, and so did *I* think it, but I must not be thwarted in this way, I tell you," rejoined her master, smacking his tongue against his smoke-dried palate, and passing his hand across his parched lips. "What are you about there, Vrowe

Micha? what are you doing in the beer closet?" continued he.

"Filling the litre," answered Micha.

"May the big rock of Rosenberg crush me to atoms, if I was not just going to bid you do it!" exclaimed Cooperslaugen, slapping the table with his hand, and rising up, in all the height and consequence of a big man in a passion. But Micha took no notice of that—at least she displayed none, but quietly sat down; and Joos finding no opposition in her imperturbability, dropped into his chair, where his wrath exploded harmlessly, like a bomb-shell bursting in a morass.

"I tell you, Micha," grumbled he, "I don't like this officiousness—I hate a servant who forestalls her master's orders. It 's quite enough to obey when you are commanded. To have the word taken out of one's mouth is downright insult—and I can bear any thing but that. What are you looking so glum for? Why do you sit there under the chimney, like a toad peeping out of a hole in the wall? Can't you be good tempered, and not drive me into a passion? What are you about, Micha, I say? Can I eat ham and cheese without a knife to cut them? *Am I* to root at them with my snout, like a hog in a trough? Why don't you give me a knife?"

"Because you did not ask for it."

"I say I did ask for it, Vrowe."

"I say you did not, Mynheer."

"I tell you, Micha, you had better not put me into a passion."

"I tell you, Mynheer Cooperslaugen, you had better put yourself out of a passion. It is a shame for you to be always quarrelling this way, and vexing yourself when one does all that one can do to please you. And I'll tell you more, I don't deserve this from you. It's a poor return for all my services; and it's a bad heart that gives such a bad temper."

A snuffling burst of tears cut short this reproach, but it was quite long enough to probe the master to the quick; for he could not deny that the beginning was true, and he was alarmed at the thought that the ending might be so as well. Besides the sight of tears always melted him; and Micha's copious tides never failed to wash away the landmarks of his resentment. On the present occasion, he was, as usual, the

first to seek reconciliation. He spoke, but his voice fell a couple of octaves; and he stretched out his hand, which Micha, softened in her turn, seized and blubbered over.

"Come, Micha, forgive and forget;" cried he; "but I am sorry you think my heart so bad—you ought to know it."

"I do, I do know it well, for the best that ever beat; and I am an ungrateful wretch to say what I did. But I didn't *think* it—I didn't indeed—and you may forgive—a word or two—of hasty—oh, oh, oh!" and the imagination of her master completed poor Micha's sentence.

The quarrel was thus made up; but the vrowe continued for a long time her sobbing accompaniment to Joos' masticating operations: for her temper, though joined to a good disposition, was of that sullen and dogged kind which is sure to have its fling.

"Yes, I certainly was a little too hot," said Joos, not over articulately, through obstructions of ham and brown bread; "but you must make allowances for me, Micha. You know I may say, without any offence, that you are but a sorry substitute for my daughter. To be always rubbing against such a lump as you is enough to set one's temper an edge, like the teeth of a harrow striking against a frozen clod. I don't wish to flatter you—but you are a good girl, and have been so for a couple of dozen years to my knowledge. But you have no mind, Micha; you can't converse with me; and little as I have to say to you, you stint me even in that. I don't like to sit with my pipe in my mouth, and drink beer without talking, like the Blackamoor's head over Madame Vermoot's shop door. I want society; and am not *myself*, since Melanie and her husband left me. She was such a good listener! and Nicholas always had a word for each of mine, no matter of what sort. But I am now forlorn, as it were. Since good Mr. Ruysten has taken up with those toad-eating Trappists, I have no one to drop in of an evening. I hate the parish priest, because—because—because he's a priest—and the exciseman hates me, because I keep the roads clear of his bribing cronies the smugglers. I have quarrelled with farmer Vranken, and farmer Cloots, and two or three more neighbours; and old Casasnooters, the notary, says his nerves can't bear my loud talking. All this is very unfortunate, Micha! It is enough to waste a man, mind and body! Just toss a couple of those black puddings into the frying

pan—I don't much like this ham;" and he put aside his plate, with the bare bone he had so industriously unfleshed. "What would I not give for a pleasant companion to pass an hour or two with me, and silence the growling of these thunder claps!"

"Hush, hush, Mynheer!" cried Micha, "don't you hear a voice outside? Some one is caught in the storm!"

"I think I do hear a faint call—yes—certainly—some traveller—though few venture this way after dark—who can it be? To the door, Micha—take the lamp—stop a moment—just let me cock my gun. No, go on quickly—the cries are close by the house."

No sooner had Micha unlatched the door, than it was blown open by a gust of wind, and her lamp was at the same time extinguished. But the continued flashes of lightning amply illuminated the farm-yard, which was in front of the house, and brought out every object in vivid relief from the intervals of gloom which obscured them. Micha, however, wanted no light to enable her to steer through the obstructions of the place, every inch of which she knew so familiarly; and her heart being to the full as stout as her person, there was no impediment to her stepping forth in search of the benighted person. She did so unhesitatingly, first calling close to her the two fierce dogs, which prowled about the yard, and, luckily for the traveller, were kept within its precints, by their instinctive alarm at the storm. Joos Cooperslaugen stood at the door, with his gun cocked to guard against treachery, and hallooed repeatedly, in a key that seemed meant to challenge the very thunder. No answer was returned to these sommonses; and Joos, being officially of a suspicious turn, called out to Micha to take heed; but Micha did not share his misgivings, or if she did, they were kept in the shade, by the outspreadings of the charity so deeply implanted in her heart. She heard her master's cautions, but did not heed them. She knew that a fellow-creature had called out for succour, and she felt irresistibly impelled to afford it, without arguing whether the appeal was true or false.

Micha made an ineffectual search in every corner of the farm-yard. She gave repeated invitations, in the kindest phrase which her Flemish jargon admitted, but no answer was returned; and she then began to entertain fears for the safety of the poor being whose voice both she and her mas-

ter had so positively heard. Neither the farmer or his vrowe believed in any one of the varieties of ghosts and goblins, which common credence attributed to the glen of Scarpenberg. Joos was one of those men, emphatically distinguished as "fearing neither man nor devil;" and Micha was a matter-of-fact lump of mortality, unlightened by the poetic leaven of superstition. They therefore persisted in supporting each other's conviction that it was a man's voice they had heard; and while Micha got soaked to the very skin, her master, ashamed to be outdone in exertion, prepared to share her labours; and having tied the flap of his hairy cap under his chin, and provided himself with the stable-lanthorn, he was in the act of wrapping himself in his cloak, when Micha discovered the object of her search, and saved both cloak and cap the necessity of repulsing the rain.

The sturdy wench had a heart so kind as to allow of compassion for pigs as well as men; and when she had convinced herself that nothing of the last mentioned species was within the reach of relief, she turned her attention to the large company of the former, which grunted and squeaked most furiously in the square enclosure which they occupied close to the farm-yard wall.

"Poor things!" sighed Micha to herself, "they know my voice;" and as she looked over into the piggery, to speak a word of recollection, a broad flash of lightning displayed the whole community standing in a circle round the body of a man, who had apparently dropped among them from the top of the wall. This intruder appeared to Micha seriously hurt, or horribly frightened, for he coiled himself up like a hedge-hog, and resisted every intimation from the eight or ten snouts that simultaneously urged his removal. Micha's efforts were more effectual, for without a moment's delay she stooped down, and raised the body on her shoulder. A pair of stout arms in an instant encircled her neck, and the knees of her burthen instinctively fastened themselves against her ribs. Thus loaded, Micha waddled through the mud and manure of the yard, followed by the whole population of the piggery, grunting forth their recognition of the hand that fed, and their resentment against the body that disturbed them.

Just as Joos Cooperslaugen stepped out of the house-door, Micha stepped in, and they came in contact rather abruptly, but not enough so to shake the new comer from his seat. He, however, opened his eyes at the shock; and

the fierce and hair-fringed face of Joos, close to his own, was an object of legitimate alarm, sufficient to make him shut them again.

"Heaven have mercy upon me!" exclaimed he, as Micha disburthened herself, by shaking him off into her master's arm-chair.

"It has had mercy on you, my friend," said Joos, "in giving you a billet for such snug quarters. So cheer up; don't be afraid, you now have the laugh against the storm. Come, come, open your eyes and your mouth, and swallow this glass of real Scheidam, and look upon a man that no one need be frightened at—Joos Cooperslaugen of Scarpenberg, overseer of the roads, from Ypres to Poperingue, from Rousbrugge to Steinwort—east and west, north and south—the same all round the compass—and pretty well known in these parts."

The stranger shook himself, and rubbed his eyes at this very reassuring speech, and swallowed unresistingly the proffered bumper of Geneva.

"That's right, my honest fellow," said Joos; "don't be afraid of it. Let your heart once get afloat in stuff *like that*, and nothing can sink it. Will you try another? *You* will? ay, silence gives consent. But open your eyes, man—look at the glass, and be grateful to it. It was my father's before me."

The stranger could not resist the appeal. He looked for a moment or two at the family relic, which was one of those capacious dram glasses so common in Belgium, of thick chrystal, with a white spiral mark in the heart of its long shank, like a little snake worming its way up to the liquid at top. The stranger lost no time in useless observation, but instantly disposed of the contents with which Joos had liberally brimmed it.

"Well, well," said the latter, with a plaintive look, "I never take this glass in my hand without thinking of my poor father. But sorrow is as useless as it's dry—so here goes!" and he tossed off a bumper in his turn.

"Oh, Lord!" moaned the stranger, "if *my* poor father could but see his prodigal son, like an evil spirit in a herd of swine!"

Micha shortly explained this allusion to her master, understanding French and the Bible sufficiently to comprehend it. Joos burst into a fit of laughter, more suitable to the

stable than the kitchen. The stranger, however, did not take it ill-temperedly; but said, with a jocose leer at the string of black pudding which Micha had laid upon the table,

"Laugh away, laugh away, most worshipful overseer—it's all fair; and I mean to take my revenge on the pigs, by an intestine attack on some of their progenitors. I confess a craving for one of these puddings, or a sausage, or any thing of that kind. Pray, my good girl, will you dress a few of these? You will join me, perhaps, Mynheer Cooperslaugen? I fear I interrupted your supper; but there is plenty left for both of us—pray sit down."

It was Joos's turn to stare, and he did so broadly, as if he expected to see the brass oozing out of the stranger's forehead. So complete a recovery of self-possession, so quick an adaptation to circumstances, so much ease, and such undoubted impudence, had rarely been witnessed in the valley of Scarpenberg.

"Come, come, my worthy host," continued the stranger, "you see I make myself at home. That is the best way to prove my gratitude; and true hospitality wants no other return. You like a joke, I find, and no doubt you can *take* as well as *give*. That is a golden rule, believe me. A *generous* jester receives freely, and sparingly bestows. Pray sit down, Mynheer. Give a chair to your master, vrowe. Here's to your health, Sir; your beer is indeed a fair match for your Geneva"—and the pint measure emptily echoed the smack of the drinker's lips.

"It is not bad, I believe," muttered Joos, hesitatingly, and quite confounded; and then (to Micha's absolute consternation), he calmly drew over a rush-bottomed chair, and placed himself at the table—resigning *his own* side of the fire, and *his own* two-armed, double-stuffed throne to the usurper, who dropped into these domestic duties, with as much ease as though he had (like a mightier monarch) "found the crown in the mud," through which he had been struggling.

Some desultory conversation, to which the stranger contributed, profusely rather than generously, according to his own theory, now took place, while Micha smothered her wonderment in the smoke of her culinary proceedings. The black puddings were ravenously assailed, and the litre two or three times filled and emptied—Joos Cooperslaugen par-

taking of the repast in about the same proportion as he had shared in the conversation. For full twenty years Joos had never felt so uneasy. He had been until that moment the very despot of his fireside circle. Every nod and wink had been a law; and his privileges of place and person were held as sacred as those of any other sovereign of the Fee-faw-fum dynasty in any country of the earth. He now appeared, on the contrary, a mere cipher in his own territory, having abdicated in favour of he did not know whom, and every thing went cross-ways. He found inconceivable difficulty in managing matters; his right hand seemed to be doing the work of his left; and he ate and drank, as it were, at the wrong side of his mouth. Micha was just as much embarrassed as her master; and she gazed, from her little chair, in silent bewilderment at his confusion.

But Joos felt amused, notwithstanding, by the fluent rhodomontade of his guest. He talked and eat with prodigious facility, and there was a quaintness in his discourse and manner, which rather tallied with the farmer's taste; so that as the glasses were successively filled and emptied, he began to be satisfied that he had actually beside him the "pleasant companion" he had been longing for about an *hour before*. There were none of the many subjects of the stranger's conversation on which he was more amusing than *himself*. He gave a most ludicrous account of his wanderings through the valley—of his fears of the storm—his joy at discovering the lights of the house—his alarm at their sudden extinction, and the terrible sounds of Joos and his handmaid's lingo, and of his prudent determination to lie close in the base security into which he tumbled by accident, after he succeeded in scaling the farm yard wall. But to all this he gave a turn of drollery, which deprived the facts of the colouring of cowardice that a less embellished portraiture would have left on them—and he finished his personal narrative as follows:

"But I am somehow thinking, friend Cooperslaugen, that you yourself have been put a little out of sorts to-night. All men and all things are alike subject to mishaps, ecclesiastics and laymen, church and state. In the bustle of revolutions, individuals and empires are both turned topsy-turvy—and if I have met the common fate, you have not quite escaped; for an overseer of the roads, deprived of his arm-chair, seems

as much out of place as a priest in a pig-sty. Isn't that true?"

"A priest! why, what the devil do you mean by that?" asked Joos, that cabalistical word having banished all the other parts of the stranger's speech.

"Mean, my worthy host? why, nothing more than that I am a priest."

"You a priest!" uttered Joos, in a mixture of astonishment, and something very like alarm.

"Ay, that I am, and a man that no one need be frightened at. Brother Petrus Maria, of the order of La Trappe, perambulator of the roads from Amiens to Aire, from Arras to Abbeville—north and south, east and west, and quite as well known in Picardy as Joos Cooperslaugen in Flanders."

"Brother Petrus Maria, of the order of La Trappe!" exclaimed Joos, in his former tone.

"Ay, or if it pleases you better, Father Pierre, the Trappist, and begging brother to his convent."

"Begging brother!" vociferated Joos, starting from his seat, which he overturned in his alarm—"Thunder and furies! What can this mean? Another of ye! Two in one day! This is too bad, and is not to be borne—it is a downright insult! What plot is hatching? What demon brought you here—and how did I suffer you to cross the threshold? Come, come, neighbour, this is a joke—I 'll be cursed if you are a priest, or a beggar either—or, if you are, I forswear, from this blessed night, my hatred of both tribes, in honour of such a pleasant, bold-faced, impudent fellow. So down I sit again, though I have made a vow never to cross my legs under the same plank with monk or mendicant. Tell me truly who and what you are; and, be what you may, I trust to *your* absolution to wipe out my perjury.

With these words Joos resumed his seat; filled fresh bumpers for himself and Petrus Maria, and calmly listened while the latter related, that having quitted the diligence at Bailleul, to cross the valley on foot, he had missed his way, and got entangled in the thickets in search of the monastery on Catsberg, where he was going on a special mission from his prior. This is a brief summary of a very circumlocutory recital, interlarded with dozens of Gasconisms, both in manner and matter; and interrupted by an abundance of hiccuping and hemming; and other consequences of what might be termed a *debauch*.

Joos seemed quite a metamorphosed man, under the influence of his companion. By the time they were both fairly fuddled, they seemed to have thoughts, feelings, glasses, and goblets all in common. They changed sides repeatedly, without knowing one from another; and there was not an object in the room that did not appear to turn round and round, even oftener than themselves. But Micha stood still, the steady pivot on which they made their various evolutions, and by her continued meditation their balance of power was preserved. She kept them on their feet, and finally put them into their respective beds. Joos Cooperslaugen's last waking thought was one of skepticism as to Micha's assurance that his head did not lie at the foot of the bed. Father Pierre chuckled even in his sleep, at having bullied so great a bully, who was overcome by the main force of impudence—a consummation that never could have been effected by all the united modesty of mankind.

CHAPTER VII.

The farmer and the priest both felt as if they had but just closed their eyes, and as if their mouths had never been shut, when they were roused, at daybreak, from that state of feverish lethargy which hard drinkers call sleep. "Water! water!" was the first word uttered by each, and the very call for it seemed to choke them. A couple of the carters, in a room adjoining their master's, started from their wholesome repose, with moist palates and clear heads, supposing the house to be on fire. Micha rushed into Father Pierre's chamber, with the same conviction; but both he and his host were discovered, sitting up in their beds, each with a large brown pitcher (provided by the forethought of Micha) at his head, and pouring down torrents into their respective throats. Knowing only that they were abruptly disturbed, they made no effort to ascertain why or wherefore; and they prepared to resume their broken slumbers with unconscious mutterings of dissatisfaction. But the loud knockings against the house door, and the calls upon Joos Cooperslaugen by name, were not to be slept through. Father Pierre, as soon

as he could collect reason enough to comprehend any thing, fancied that robbers were breaking in, hid his face under the bed-clothes, and instantly became sober from the effect of fear. Joos Cooperslaugen recovered *his* senses by the force of feeling. Recognising, with a sudden conviction, the voice of his son-in-law Nicholas, he sprang out of bed into the middle of the floor, and as if a stream of light had burst upon his mind, and imparted to it the clearness of a purer source, he clasped his hands together, and with fixed looks and painful energy, exclaimed—

"Martin Vandersteen is dead!"

Nicholas, admitted into the house by the servants, mounted quickly to their master's room, and, as he entered, he saw the giant figure of Joos standing before him, in an attitude and air of unwonted despondency. Nicholas, not imagining that any sinister presentiment could have penetrated his father-in-law's sternness of mind, supposed that some personal mishap must have caused his evident sorrow.

"Why, how now, Mr. Cooperslaugen," said he, laying his hand on that of Joos, "what is the cause of this? What has happened?"

"What has happened!" repeated Joos, with a firm, but mournful tone, and a compressed expression of features which announced an internal struggle; "what has happened, Nicholas! Is it for you to ask that? Does the bearer of ill-news need to be told his own story? Or is it that you think to prepare me for it—to break it to me? But I hope you know me too well, Nicholas. Joos Cooperslaugen is no child, nor chicken-hearted. The old elm in the avenue there, may be bent by a storm-gust, but does not need a zephyr to tell what is coming. Just so with Joos Cooperslaugen. I am always ready for the blast, and I feel that it is come *now*, without any one to say so. I am not a bit superstitious, I believe, but I can calculate a little, though no great scholar: and I well know that one thing only could have brought you here, through such a night as the last. Women may be left to watch by a *corpse*, but a son could not have quitted a father, struggling with death. Martin Vandersteen is dead! You have lost a good father, Nicholas, and I the best of friends. He is not to be replaced either ways. But we may do much for each other, my boy. Be you always *my* friend, and I will, please God! be a father to you. Let us bear this blow like men, Nicholas.

What are you whimpering about? It is for your poor mother and Melanie to cry, but you and I—two men—aye, and brave ones, though I say it—we should not *show* a weakness, any how, let us *feel* what we may."

And with this philosophical axiom he dashed away the *evidences* from his eyes, and strove to deceive Nicholas, as well as himself, by hoarse and half-articulated calls to Micha to prepare some dry clothes and other refreshments for her young master. While she so employed herself, Joos as quickly completed his rustic toilette, Nicholas briefly detailing the events of the preceding night, which had made the cottage at Huysenclaus so sorrowful a contrast to the residence of its owner.

Joos listened with deep attention to the circumstances affecting the death of his friend, and with unbounded astonishment to all that related to Ernest. He fully entered into Nicholas's anxiety as to his brother, of whom he was now in search, having, as Joos justly supposed, left the duties to the dead to the care of his grief-stricken wife and mother.

The most likely place of discovering Ernest appeared to be his monastery—at least so calculated Joos and *Nicholas;* and there they resolved on going immediately. The latter having changed some parts of his dress, from his homely wardrobe, urged an instant setting out, and Joos declared his readiness, but suddenly exclaimed, in answer to a whisper from Micha,

"The devil! That 's very true—I had quite forgotten—this sad news drove him utterly out of my head. I wish he was well out of the house—he brought nothing but bad luck into it. Call him up, Micha, and tell him I am ready to show him the road to the monastery. Little did I think I should ever pay it a visit, or have one of its hypocritical tribe within my doors! Wait a minute or two, Nicholas. One of your unfortunate brother's fraternity is here—the very fellow, perhaps, that kidnapped poor Ernest five years ago. Let us wait for him, he is going to Catsberg as well as ourselves; and, to tell you the truth, I don't like to leave him in the house behind me. Nothing has been in its own place since he came; and there is no knowing what might stick to him, should he go off unwatched. He calls himself a beggar,

and seems just such a one as would never be at a loss to find a wallet, and wherewithal to fill it. He says he is a priest. That may be—but if so, the breed is well crossed since the revolution—he is the first I have sat with since. But here he comes—he must have been ready before Micha summoned him."

And so, in fact, he had been; for having cautiously uncovered one of his ears, while the rest of his person lay wrapt in the counterpane, he had heard a considerable part of Nicholas's communication to Joos. Thus satisfied of his safety from the fancied danger, he quickly dressed, and came down stairs as soon as summoned, thinking to hide the memory of his excess behind an *unblushing* face, which, however, turned truth's evidence, by its scorched and bloated appearance. He exchanged salutations with his host, wearing an air of daylight propriety; and darting a glance at Nicholas from eyes of liquid flame, he gave his morning benediction to both, bowing down his head with a mock humility, worthy of any that ever bent to the pressure of the mitre which its tongue had just refused.

Under these ill-omened auspices Joos and Nicholas set out, accompanied by him who was fitter to be their secular follower than their spiritual guide. They had scarcely quitted the farm, and passed by the avenue to the narrow road leading through the glen, when they found their passage obstructed. One of the oaks that skirted it, but which had been shivered by the lightning, lay scattered across the way. The rivulets which ran down the acclivities at each side were swoln by the rain; and, overflowing their channels, they carried down clay, stones, and shrubs, which, cementing the prostrate branches, made at that particular spot a temporary lake of considerable extent. The wooded side of Catsberg was opposite; and while Joos and Nicholas held counsel together, as to the better direction for seeking a passage, their companion, whose thirsty glances seemed quenching themselves in the pool, perceived nearly at the farther side, the body of a man, partly in the water, and partly entangled in the branches. He communicated his discovery to the others, who instantly ran with him close to the spot; and all three casting eager looks upon the face which lay clearly exposed, exclaimed together,

"Placidus!"

"Ernest Vandersteen!"

"My brother!"

They were all right in their epithets—but the hapless being recognised, replied not to their joint exclamations. Without another word they all stepped into the water; and wading through it nearly breast high, they reached the body, which they immediately lifted to the bank beyond.

Joos Cooperslaugen feeling the pale face, and taking up one of the wet cold hands in his, exclaimed, "Poor fellow, he is stone dead!"

Petrus Maria, pulling forth the empty purse from the tattered coat, cried out, "Unfortunate Placidus, he has been robbed and murdered!"

Nicholas, in the instinct of affection, tore open the vestments, and placed his hand upon his brother's heart—"He lives—he lives! His heart still beats! He may yet be restored—to the monastery, to the monastery!"

Such were the exclamations of Nicholas, and as he spoke he lifted the body in his arms. He soon gained the summit of Catsberg, occasionally relieved from his pitiable burden by his strong-limbed companions, who readily joined in what they, nevertheless, considered a hopeless exertion. The monastery was now close to them, and Petrus Maria advanced to the little door of entrance to the garden. At his loud signal it was instantly opened, and the prior, with some of the brotherhood, hurried out, surprised at the unusually early visit which the bell so loudly announced.

The prior and his followers were struck with horror at Petrus Maria's hurried expression of his own worst fears, and at the fatal confirmation which seemed stamped on Ernest's corpse-like face. With the utmost promptness the body was conveyed into the house, and the best means were resorted to for restoring suspended animation, with an energy, steadiness, and skill, that gave every possible chance for success. In a short time those efforts were rewarded. All the symptoms of life appeared—but no evidence of returning reason became visible. A confused mixture of opinions and conjectures was put forward, as to the best method for leading back the mind to sensibility. Cooperslaugen, Nicholas, and Petrus Maria had each his separate theory; but the prior took upon himself the direction of the subject; and the means he employed turned out as efficacious as they appeared singular.

He ordered the freely-breathing but motionless body to

be gently carried to the open air, and thence into the chapel, where the brethren were assembling for the morning service. Stretched on a mattress in the centre of the aisle, and close to the altar steps—a line of his brother monks on each side, and he so placed that his opening glances would rest upon the most sacred objects of a pious Catholic's belief—lay the still senseless form of Ernest, awaiting the process of that new creation which was to raise him up again, in all the power and spirit of mortal life.

Nicholas and his father-in-law watched, from the gallery above, the progress of the strange and solemn scene. They looked down on the monks, with bare heads and bended bodies; on the prior prepared for officiating at the plainly decorated altar; on Ernest's outstretched figure and pallid countenance; and this simple combination of human forms sent a feeling of solemnity through the rough and irreverent observers that the proudest display of sectarian splendours would have failed to excite. Both Joos and Nicholas were affected, in a manner unknown to them before; and when the deep chanting of the matin service commenced, they involuntarily sunk on their knees, and joined in the prayers which the brotherhood addressed to Heaven for the restoration to mental life and light of him who absorbed the thoughts of all.

During the progress of the ceremony the measures taken by the prior were amply justified. The tolling of the bell, the low-murmured sounds of the opening service, and then the swellings of the chorused harmonies had acted on the mind that gradually tended towards resuscitation. The new development of its faculties was witnessed with joy by the little congregation, each individual feeling his separate share in the result which seemed to flow from the united supplications of all.

The first proof of Ernest's awakened sensibility to the scene, were the spasmodic movements of lips and eyelids, and the rapid clenching and opening of the hands, as if the senses were making simultaneous efforts at expression. Flushings came across the face, the breast heaved, low sighs burst from it, and finally a rush of tears seemed to remove the last obstruction to returning reason. Then memory began to work. A sudden start—a rapid change of posture—the body raised on one knee—the hand passed across the brow—an astonished glance sent round—a momentary gaze

upon the priest—and an instant relapse into insensibility—these were the signs that spoke the mind's revival, and the first impressions by which it was affected.

The service was now ended, and the prior motioned to the brethren to retire. He instantly followed them; and proceeding to the gallery, with a few of the monks, he watched, in conjunction with Nicholas and Joos, the further display of Ernest's recovery. He had not long to wait. The momentary relapse into exhaustion was now past. Ernest again raised himself up, and after a brief space, which appeared occupied in rallying his scattered thoughts, he rose upon his feet; and then, with uplifted hands, sunk in the attitude of prayer, and finally prostrated himself upon the altar steps. The fervent solemnity of his manner spoke a full conviction of his situation; and it was further confirmed by his soon quitting his kneeling posture, and, with clasped hands and downcast looks, taking the direct passage to his own cell. No obstruction was offered to his way; and he was observed to enter silently, and sink on his bed, as if his strength had failed at the moment he reached that haven of refuge from the world.

It was thus that the considerate good sense of the *prior* had smoothed for the poor sufferer the path of recovery; and by letting him revive, as it were, within the very bosom of religion, allaying the anguish of recollections which could not be suppressed. The broken details which Nicholas gave of his father's death, and the unexplained fact of Ernest's loss of the money on his tour, were causes enough for the prior's precautions, and for the channel into which he so successfully strove to turn his awakening thoughts. Had the prior known *all* the combining feelings that drove Ernest out into the storm, and sent him wandering on, till the rain and wind and fatigue had beaten him down, to be saved almost by miracle from death, he had probably abandoned in despair the task of ministering to a mind so agonized.

It would be fruitless to trace the labyrinth of conjecture, as to Ernest's sensations while he lay in his solitude. His mind must have reproduced, in its own despite, many of the scenes and much of the feelings he had so lately acted in and suffered. But religious devotion had regained its wonted ascendancy, and happily for him, its impression was now even stronger than before. The past events, mighty as had been their effect, were totally overpowed by the inspiration

which seemed newly poured into him ; and he felt as though he had wandered in a gloomy dream, and awoke in the sunshine of Heaven. His only anxiety was to throw off the load which secrecy laid on his heart, to avow the enormities of which he was self-accused and self-convicted ; and to bury in the dreariest seclusion and severest penitence the very memory of the world, which he now finally and for ever renounced. Such was the progress of recovered thought in the mind of the young Trappist ; and while it powerfully worked its way in heart and brain, the prior, Nicholas, and Joos conversed together on Ernest's past and present state ; Petrus Maria attending on their conference, in right of the share he had had in rescuing him from death.

The prior anxiously entered into particulars relating to the object of his solicitude. His inquiries were not confined to the mere circumstances of his immediate situation and its causes, but went back into the details of his early life, ere he had joined the fraternity. On these points Joos Cooperslaugen felt himself quite competent to speak; and he entered into a fluent, and somewhat boisterous detail, which need not be repeated here. It wound up by a sort of spoken appendix, to the following effect :

" So you see he was always inclined to laziness, and superstition, and religion ; and no wonder (saving respect) that he took up with you and your like. He never worked at the farm, like Nicholas, there ; he employed himself doing nothing ; he never took the plough in his hand, nor attended markets, nor studied any thing worth while—nothing but books, and trash of that kind. God knows what put matrimony into his head ; but when he asked me for Melanie, I told him he was fitter for a priest or an opera singer, than a husband to a pretty girl—and that, perhaps, gave him the notion of joining company with you. And here you have him now again, and I hope you 'll keep him fast. For myself, I am now more than ever rejoiced at the part I took. I see what good luck my daughter had, in getting such a fine rough-handed fellow as Nicholas, instead of a whimpering booby like Ernest, who is fit for nothing better than fasting and praying, starving and begging, wasting himself, and worrying Heaven. So now, Mr. Prior, I wish you good bye ; the morning is wearing fast ; and Nicholas and I must ride some leagues, to bury the poor father of this good-for-nothing son ; and I wish you joy of your bargain !"

During this communication of facts and opinions, to which the prior listened with calm attention, Petrus Maria had beckoned Nicholas aside. He had learned enough, from the broken statements of the latter, to take it for granted that Ernest had somehow made away with the money he had gathered; and having a tender conscience for the peccadillos of others, whatever might be its severity in relation to his own, he whispered into Nicholas's ear,

"Now take a friend's advice, Mr. Nicholas, and when you speak to the prior again, say nothing as to how the money disappeared. What so likely as that poor Brother Placidus was robbed? Didn't I think so when I found him in the puddle, with his empty purse in his pocket? Where's the use in denying that? Will it bring the guelders back? Then leave things just as they are—a silent tongue is a safe witness—if it explains no fact, it tells no lie. Leave the money matter all to me. I will state the fact of the empty purse and the torn pocket, and when Brother Placidus is able to see me, I will give him a lesson as to what he should say, and what he should *not* say—a point of much more importance, and equally great in the ways of the world as in a Trappist's cell. So, hush! not a word about florins or stuyvers; you know, I suppose, that the worst crime against the church is making away with its money. *It is* the most heinous of heinous sins, if it be found out; and should excommunication follow the discovery, there is no chance for the culprit here or hereafter, for Heaven *must* ratify the sentence that sends him to hell. So, St. Peter take care of you, and bless you, and keep your tongue from wagging!"

Nicholas felt no disposition to injure his brother in this world or the next, and he observed the hint thus given him. Agreeing with the prior, that Ernest should be left for some time free from all intrusion, he and Joos took leave of the monastery and its inmates; and, first returning home, they provided themselves with horses, and proceeded on their painful duty to Huysenclaus' farm.

As soon as they had left the monastery, Petrus Maria proceeded to communicate the object of his mission to the prior. It consisted merely of some directions for domestic discipline, which strict secrecy and their probable insignificance put beyond my reach, and left me no inclination to strain after. Petrus Maria then taking plenary advantage of his dispensation, paid a visit to the cook, and conscientiously overhauled

the private stores of the larder. I cannot say exactly what he found there; but it may be safely inferred there was not much of such materials as he rejoiced in, for he was soon seen trudging down the hill, and entering Madame Vermoot's hospitable door. A thick vapour curling up from the chimney gave an almost immediate announcement of his visit and its object, but we may safely suppose that, begin as it might, it did not *end* in smoke.

The prior, in the mean time, visited Ernest in his cell. Their conference was a long one, but its particulars did not transpire. It may easily be believed that the confession was both ample and honest; and that Petrus Maria's cunning, and the caution of Nicholas, were rendered nugatory by the conscientious revelations of the penitent. The self-inflicted penance was a vow of perpetual silence which no circumstance was ever to absolve; an attendance for life on every religious rite observed in the monastery; a total seclusion from all lay intercourse, without exception; an abstinence from all but one scanty meal a day until nature might sink under the privation; and the public avowal of his story, as a warning to all who might follow him in the perilous temptations of a "Begging Brother's" career.

These hard conditions, towards a reconciliation with himself, and Heaven's forgiveness, had been for a long time rigidly observed. The victim to a too fervid imagination and over-excited mind, bore up, as best he could, against a punishment, outrageously violent in comparison with his errors, and murderous in its effect upon his health. The brilliant but consuming meteor of fanaticism shone on his cheerless doom; but it was to him the light of Heaven itself. In this delusion he was happy—happy in despite of all he had suffered in reality, and in remembrance again endured. For whatever he had known of pleasure was not revived in recollection; but long-buried feelings of misery seemed to start from their tombs, and haunted him still. These formed the earthly purgatory from which he was at length set free, by the force of that exalted and exaggerated fervour, which raises the fanatic to a sphere of transport, that exists for him alone.

Thus the young Trappist finished his wordly course; for the frail link which held him still to life could scarcely be called a tenure of the world. Thus did I see him, and mark him, as I have faintly sketched in the introduction to his story.

Consumption had too plainly settled in his frame, which was at once supported and worn down by the intenseness of his devotion.

A long winter has passed since then! I know not what results it may have brought, or what resistance to its wasting damps and colds was offered by Ernest's broken constitution. In all human probability he has ere now sunk into that remote and simple grave, which he had claimed from his superior's indulgence, on the little eminence that overhung the vale of Scarpenberg. And, even now, I can fancy the gentle form of Melanie gazing upwards on the spot, and putting forth prayers for the repose of his soul, whom she had loved so well without sin, and mourned so deeply without repentance.

Note.—It was in the year 1650, that one Mannaert, a soldier in the regiment of Colonel Vauboquet, at the time in garrison at Furnes, urged by want of money and the bad advice of a comrade called Mathurin Le Jeusne, committed an act of sacrilege, that inspired a horror almost as *great* as did the famous outrage of Jonathas, the Jew of Louvain, three hundred years before, which gave rise to the *miracle* of the bleeding Host, and the jubilee by which it is so splendidly celebrated at Brussels every fifty years.

The crime in question consisted in the soldier Mannaert having approached the altar, in the feigned humility of a communicant, and having immediately removed the consecrated wafer from his mouth, wrapped it in a pocket-handkerchief, and carried it safely and secretly to his quarters. There, in conjunction with the instigator of his sacrilege, he proceeded to burn the sacred Host, hoping, by some preparation of the ashes, of which we have not the recipe on record, he might succeed in rendering his person invulnerable, and gain an unlimited command over the wealth of the world. But scarcely had he consummated the unholy deed, than, conscience-struck, and nearly frantic with remorse, the infatuated man rushed from the scene of his impiety, fled, like a maniac, through the town, and at length, exhausted and worn out by fatigue and agitation, he was arrested: when, perhaps unconscious of the self-destroying effect of his

avowal, he amply acknowledged his crime. Mercy, the most god-like attribute of Power, slept deeply in those days; nor was she awakened by the sounding voice of Bigotry to stretch her protecting arm over the doomed offender. On the Ash-Wednesday following the commission of his crime, (the interval being spent no doubt in the tortures of repentance and *the question*) he was led to the various corners of the town, amidst the execrations of the people, strangled by the common executioner, and his body, with that of his associate in daring ignorance, (then construed wilful guilt,) burned in the market-place, and the anathematized ashes scattered to the winds.

To appease the divine wrath, and give a warning lesson to posterity, the procession of the Passion was instituted; and, to the disgrace of human reason and the age we live in, it is not yet abolished.

THE END.